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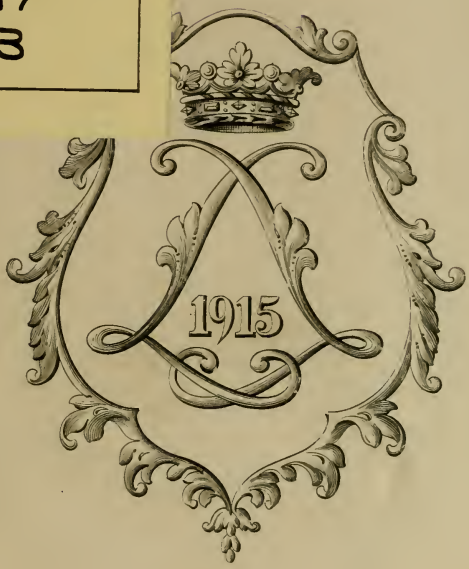

CAPRICE:

OR

ANECDOTES

OF

THE LISTOWEL FAMILY.

Howlett and Brimmer, Printers,
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OF

THE LISTOWEL FAMILY.

AN IRISH NOVEL, IN THREE VOLUMES,

By an Unknown.

..... All made of fantasy,
All made of passions, and all made of wishes.
Shakspeare.

VOL. III.

London:
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CAPRICE.

CHAPTER I.

"And I was caught in folly's snare,
And join'd her giddy train—
But found her soon the nurse of care,
And punishment and pain."

VILLARS received Lady Elizabeth's note, late on the evening it was written. He could not conjecture what her business with him was:—she never, during the many years they resided under the same roof, had any. 'What, therefore, could she want with him now?' His mind misgave him; he dreaded returning to Holly Mount, lest he should meet

Mrs. Dunstanville or her niece; yet, to refuse Lady Elizabeth he felt was impossible. He took the precaution of acquainting Listowel of the dilemma he was in; and requested he would contrive to occupy, during his visit, the two ladies he most dreaded meeting: and, if that should not be in his power, requested he would send a messenger to stop him on the way, as it was of the utmost importance that he should not be recognized by those ladies, until he had seen his uncle, of whose forgiveness he did not despair, if he could reach Dunstanville Hall before their malicious letters. He knew they entertained a strong suspicion of his real name, from their questioning Eleanor, whom, they had pressed very hard to know, why she continued so long in the old building with Mr. Villars, whom they presumed, was a stranger.

Eleanor allowed them to suppose, giving them little satisfaction in her

replies. Awed by the gravity of her manner, for which they thought a headache an insufficient excuse, they did not venture to pursue the subject further.

Poor Eleanor had been dreadfully shocked by the discovery of their treachery: she endeavoured to conceal her feelings; but at best, she was a bad hypocrite, and her mother too well understood, from her averted eye and conscious manner, that she was discovered. Her child's lovely open countenance was now no longer turned towards her parent in fond reliance. She made no complaint, certainly; and if Mrs. Dunstanville were unwell, she paid her, as usual, the most anxious attention; but her intelligent eyes no longer beamed on her with affection. It seemed, as if the same forms continued;—but, as if the heart, the tender affectionate heart, of her child were chilled towards her for ever. The night after Eleanor saw Villars, neither mo-

ther nor daughter closed their eyes; they occupied the same room, yet Sybella almost persuaded Mrs. Dunstanville that they might be mistaken in their surmise. "'Conscience,'" observed she, smiling contemptuously, "they say, makes 'cowards of us all;' you, therefore view your daughter's conduct through a false medium: she says, she has a head-ache, this damp climate may make her a little nervous."

Day after day elapsed; there was no change in Eleanor's manner; and Mrs. Dunstanville could no longer doubt her eyes were opened. Again she lamented her daughter's estrangement; declaring, she should be miserable until allowed to regain her confidence, by a full disclosure of, at least, her part in the deception. Sybella ridiculing her uneasiness, desired her not to fret at the poor child's being a little sulky, and that, when she was married to Talbot, all would be well.

"Surely you do not think she will now marry him?"

"Why not? Her poverty, not her will, consented, and the grand secret of the will is entirely your own!" said Sybella, exultingly.

"Oh, Sybella! how can you be so cruel! My angel child does not merit the treatment she has met with.—Her looks are daggers to me.—Let me purchase her forgiveness by a confession, and allow her to form her happiness in her own way. After all, my dear niece, you have punished Charles's desertion of you heavily:—after so many years of banishment, might we not, dear Sybella, take him into favour?"

"What, madam!" returned Sybella, her whole countenance contorted with passion, and fixing her stern and flashing eye on the poor timid Mrs. Dunstanville; "Do you mean to betray me? Weak woman! Is it thus you would betray your friend?—who em-

barked all—body and soul, in your service? How can I, in terms sufficiently strong, express my contempt of such conduct! But, beware!—if affection and gratitude cannot restrain you, dread my vengeance! Remember, 'I can a tale unfold,' that will not whiten you in your little prude's estimation."

"How can you terrify me so, Sybella? You know I am very nervous, and cannot endure seeing you in your tantrums. You need not make such a bustle; you know I was only asking your advice. At all events, I did not mean to betray you; only to acknowledge my own error—that would satisfy Eleanor's well regulated mind; she would express no impatience, nor make inquiry beyond what I desired."

"I believe," returned Sybella, "you would sacrifice me, and the whole world, sooner than this paragon of yours should have a moment's uneasiness; but you

know who you have to deal with, and that there is not much pity in my composition!"

'Ah!' thought Mrs. Dunstanville, looking at her hideous countenance, inflamed with anger; 'I might as well expect mercy from a ferocious animal!'

Sybella continued:—"Villars is to be here to-day, for the mere purpose of gratifying my curiosity; Lady Elizabeth sent for him. Keep Eleanor out of the way; they have, I am certain, been planning; but, when I have such a perfect Machiavel in my service as young Belmont, any plans they can form will be but as childrens' play."

Mrs. Dunstanville shuddered, whilst she listened.

"When I have once ascertained, him to be Charles Dunstanville, I will write my father such a letter, that will prevent his ever taking him into favour, except as my husband. I will teach him, that the last of the younger branch

of the Dunstanvilles is not to be treated with indignity,"—she said, tossing her large head,—" is not to be courted, and then deserted !"

Here their conference ended. Mrs. Dunstanville was afraid to urge her further, lest she should disclose an occurrence of her early life. She was, when young, fond of cards, and carried her passion so far, that she could, by the designing, be led on to gambling:—her husband repeatedly paid her play debts, and, at length, lost his temper at their frequent recurrence; threatening, if she applied again, to stop her allowance; and positively forbade her touching another card. In despite of this threat, she played with her usual spirit, led on by the young Baron de Morne, the Lothario of the day. Sybella was then a very young woman. Love having made her keen-sighted, she soon discovered that the young Baron had won all her aunt's money; that, from inability to

pay, she suffered him to continue her creditor; and, even, at times, consented to borrow from him small sums with which she put herself in Fortune's way, hoping, that a lucky hit would enable her to repay all; resolving then to give up for ever the dangerous pursuit.

The baron, highly flattered at being made her banker, gave her every encouragement to borrow. Their account was becoming long; he tried to make it complicated; and, under pretence of settling, paid her long visits, at times when he knew he should find her alone. The lynx eye of scandal discovered that he was her banker, and that the handsome baron generally spent his mornings with the young and lovely Mrs. Dunstanville.

Sybella loved the baron, and flattered herself, thatif she could once attract his notice, let him know she had a large independent fortune, and would be, probably, heiress to her father's immense

property, he might then be led seriously, to consider her as an advantageous alliance; and prop his falling fortunes, by making her Baroness de Morne.

She affected great attachment to her aunt, and endeavoured to gain her confidence; representing to her, how much her reputation suffered by her long and private interviews with the baron, and terrified her, lest they should come to her husband's knowledge. At length, she drew from her a true statement of all her difficulties, and with the most apparent generosity took the whole debt on herself—likewise the task of settling with the baron; on her aunt's promising she would involve herself with him no further, and never again admit him to a private interview.

Mrs. Dunstanville, overcome with gratitude, made every promise she could desire, and faithfully kept her word; ever after feeling a kind of horror towards every species of gambling.

The following morning Sybella received De Morne. Great was his disappointment: he refused to receive the money from any one but his fair debtor; and, in a most ungallant manner, walked off.

Early in the evening, Mrs. Dunstanville received a letter from the baron, warmly remonstrating against her cruelty; and requesting to know for what offence she had handed him over to her frightful dwarf. As for the money, it was no object to him, and he never would receive it unless from her fair hands. He requested, that if she did not choose to admit him on the following morning, she would, at least, let him know her pleasure by letter; as he never would again hold communication with her forward pigmy, who haunted him every where.

This violent aversion soon wore away, on Mrs. Dunstanville's representing to him the magnitude of her niece's charms;

he then condescended to receive from her tiny hands the sum due; called her his charming fairy, gifted with Fortunatus's purse; with which he thought to silence his clamorous creditors. Indeed, the doing so was now become necessary to the preservation of his liberty.

De Morne now paid Sybella close homage,—she smiled propitiously. He would shortly have led her to the Hymeneal altar, in defiance of her father, or of the violent aversion he felt towards her; but that he discovered she would lose the bulk of her fortune if she married without her father's consent.

On making this discovery, he wrote her a letter, in which he drew a melancholy picture of his grief, on being obliged to give up his lovely fairy.—That, he felt the sacrifice so severely, he had not nerves to resign all his hopes until the last moment; and that she should not receive this, his last farewell, until he had left the kingdom.

This letter threw his fairy into unfeigned despair; for, if she loved mortal, it was the Baron de Morne.

Charles Dunstanville was then approaching manhood: she never regarded him but as one that might deprive her of her inheritance; he was her father's greatest favourite. The old gentleman looked on him with pride and pleasure: frequently, he would say, since heaven had blessed him with such a nephew to inherit his property, and hand down his name to posterity, he should not repine at having no son. Women he despised; most of all his daughter. 'Poor little *wee* thing,' he would say, 'might get a husband by her fortune, if a Petruchio could be found.'

These were his ideas, until the family went to the Continent. She then, for the first time in her life, studied to please her parent, and to conduct herself amiably in his presence. Without

much trouble, she persuaded him that her cousin Charles endeavoured to gain her affections; and he, witnessing her anxious attendance on him during his illness—his gratitude on recovery—with many other trivial circumstances, pointed out by her, was led to believe the match desirable.

His displeasure against his nephew had long since subsided: with a heavy heart he mourned his absence, and had almost taken a dislike to his daughter, for having deprived him of this green branch, which, he hoped, would have supported his declining age.

CHAPTER II.

"Thus the poor bird, by some disast'rous fate,
Caught and imprison'd in a lonely cage,
Torn from its native fields, and dearer mate,
Flutters awhile, and spends its little rage."

A LITTLE before the time Villars was expected, Listowel invited the ladies to accompany him to a grove which he had lately planted, and was then making some additions to. He was anxious, he said, to have their opinion; addressing himself particularly to Sybella and her aunt. They, pleased at the compliment paid to their taste, immediately prepared to accompany him, considering it so near the house, that they should not be many minutes away.

They admired the plantation, complimenting him judiciously on his taste

and judgment in planting. The men were still at work, and the ladies were amusing themselves in pointing out where their favourite trees should be placed, when the workmens' bell rung. Immediately after their departure, the ladies proposed returning to the house. when, to their utter dismay, they found the bridge by which they had entered, drawn up. Listowel laughed heartily. "What will become of you, ladies?—This plantation is surrounded by a deep moat, cut here for the purpose of draining the ground:—no egress or regress but when that bridge is thrown across. —The workmen, I suppose, forgot our being here, and drew up the bridge, lest the cattle in the field adjoining, should find their way over it, and destroy my young trees."

"Is there no way of our leaving this place?" screamed Sybella. "Can you not throw that long tree across?" pointing to one lying on the grass, that had been lately felled.

"Impossible! it would require three men to lift that tree. However," rejoined he, "your case is not desperate, the men only stay away an hour.—Perhaps, if the situation they have reduced us to, occur to them, they will fly to liberate us."

"If not, we must remain prisoners here for a whole hour!" exclaimed Sybella.

"Certainly; have patience," said Listowel; "we may walk round and admire some pretty views."

"I cannot," replied Sybella. "I *must* return to the house—I will cross the moat—I *will* get over!"

"If your power of acting," returned Listowel, "equalled your decision of character—"

"You shall not lock me up in your bogs!" resumed she, looking furiously at Listowel.

Listowel smiled, and observed, women had not much patience. "See how

calm I am, yet, I have more reason to complain.—I expect Villars will call at this hour,—I fear I shall miss seeing him.—There he is!" exclaimed he, looking through a pocket telescope.—"I see him on the steps of the hall door—there! he is gone into the house; perhaps Lady Elizabeth may bring him this way."

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Mrs. Dunstanville, gladly catching hold of any pretence to keep Sybella quiet—"Mr. Villars will certainly come to seek you; did you not say, he had business with you?"

"No," said Listowel, resolved not to make their minds too easy; "Villars has no business with me,—I have with him,—which, unfortunately, he does not know:—still, I think he will not go without bidding me farewell."

At length the welcome bell sounded.

"Now!" exclaimed Sybella, "We shall have liberty; the men will now return to their work!"

Listowel smiled.—"Have they," inquired he, "left any of their tools behind?"

"No, they have taken their spades and shovels along with them," said Mrs. Dunstanville, despondingly.

"Then I fear," observed Listowel, dissembling his mirth under an appearance of great woe, "your patience will be put to further proof; a severer trial than I at first supposed."

"What do you tell me? Have they finished this job? Are we to be pent up here for an indefinite time?" inquired Sybella.

"Even so, our only hope of a speedy enlargement, is from some charitable passenger."

Sybella grew pale with passion: turning to Listowel, with an affected simple smile—"You might, I think, Mr. Listowel, spend your time better than locking up your company in a bog.—I heard, indeed, many stories of the Irish before I came over, and was warned not

to trust myself among them.—I laughed, when I was told, in point of civilization, they were a century behind England; judging, in trusting myself among the higher orders, I need not fear experiencing the fate of the Irish princess, who was confined in a bog. You may laugh,—but, I assure you, sir, whatever may be your motive, whether, one of your Irish practical jokes,—or, the more laudable one of concealing Mr. Villars from me,—I will not submit to it; and insist on your giving me instant liberty!"

"You see it is impossible:—unless you suppose me gifted with wings—were you not told my wild countrymen generally have them?—I might then fly across the moat, and call some one to your relief.—But," continued he, "Villars will be highly flattered, when I tell him the soft emotion a fair lady has betrayed in being deprived of his company."

"I do not understand your witticism, sir, but——"

"Oh! unfortunate prisoners that we are!" exclaimed Listowel. "There! I see Villars riding slowly up the back approach.—There! the gate is open!—he is now on the road, unconscious of our miserable fate, and of our anxiety to see him!"

"Can you not call? Can you not whistle?" said Sybella, crying out for assistance, to the utmost extent of her voice.

CHAPTER III.

"This hasty purpose fix'd, they part,
Each with a griev'd and anxious heart."

Lady Elizabeth detained Villars as long as possible, expecting every moment Miss Dunstanville would return from her walk. At length, as Villars' time was limited, she was obliged to allow him to depart; requesting, he would first go through the grounds with Miss Eleanor Dunstanville, in search of Mr. Listowel. She did not mention the ladies, supposing he wished to avoid them.

Eleanor and Villars readily obeyed her order; highly diverted, thinking how enraged Sybella would be; and that she was not so clever as usual in planning. They knew, by a note Villars received at

the gate, that she was to be locked up in the plantation until after his departure Yet, Eleanor was afraid to prolong their walk, least Sybella should contrive to cross the moat.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Villars, "unless, like a true witch, she ride over on her broom-stick. But let us not waste our precious moments in talking of her. Tell me the result of your last night's reflections. Do you approve of the plan proposed?"

"My mother has certainly treated me like a wayward child, that is to be managed by stories and little deceptions. Still, she is my mother; and, although she has no reliance on my obedience, and respect to her wishes, yet, I am nevertheless bound. I will never, even for you, my dearest Charles! disobey her!"

"I suppose then you will marry Talbot?"

"You men are so impatient, that I am

certain, if fate, or some irresistible charm did not influence us females, we could do without you. Jesting apart, I give Mr. Listowel's advice the preference:—be guided by him; return to your uncle, who is impatient to embrace you; and then, if you do not change your mind," said Eleanor, smiling and blushing, "you may renew your offers to me. I may then claim," continued Eleanor, "mamma's promise; she will be ashamed, longer to trifle with her dutiful child."

"Admirable!—Talbot is likewise pre-engaged; therefore, the higher powers will be glad to compromise. I shall not have to reproach myself for reducing you to poverty. One thousand a-year, when the accumulation of my income is accounted for, I have of my own. Will that, my love! with your own fortune, be adequate to your desires?"

"A thousand a-year will be riches to us!—My fortune, my dearest Charles! will you leave with my mother?—She

requires a larger income than we do. Will you take a portionless bride, and accept this proof of my love, in consenting to be indebted to you for every thing?"

"A thousand times dearer to me for this generosity; which, I must say, will heap coals of fire on your mother's head!"

"Do not say so; Sybella has blinded her better judgment. I am certain all her planning and counter-planning was intended for my happiness."

"Well, my love! I respect your parent too much to make further comment. But, with me, the least want of candour banishes friendship. It was that amiable disposition in you, that first gained my heart; when, in our first youth, we had an entire communication of thoughts, interests, and pleasures; alike, we had to struggle against Sybella's violent temper; and alike, in absence from each other, we struggled

for premiums at school, to have the felicity of presenting them to each other, as proofs of our diligence."

"I think if you had not roused my ambition, I should have fallen a prey to her tyranny; or, at least, my temper would have been soured. But, my dear friend! we forget Mr. Listowel is all this time a prisoner!"

"Very true; Sybella is showing off for him; I verily believe she will box him!—Come with me towards the gate; I will send the steward to liberate him."

"Remember, Charles, you lose not a moment in returning to your uncle, before Sybella can tell her story. Oh, my friend! how can I endure to part with you!—I sometimes have a sad presentiment that years will again elapse before we meet!"

"Do not say so; fortune smiles on us. Talbot is not mercenary, and his affections are engaged," said young Dunstanville.

"That, my dear Charles! is a sore subject. I find you and he have always been rivals. I suppose it is the same thing to you which of his mistresses he leaves you?"

"Did I not, my friend, explain all that to you? The poor girl is now in Dublin, pray visit her. I pity her situation; solicited by the man she loves to enter a family, who, I fear, will treat her with contempt. Her disposition is too noble ever to listen to him."

They now bade each other a tender adieu. He promised to travel day and night until he saw his uncle; and, as soon as possible, to let her know what reception he met with.

CHAPTER IV.

Or, in that wayward mood of mind,
When anxious feelings are combin'd,
When joy and sorrow mingle near,
And Hope's bright wings are check'd by Fear,
And rising doubts keep transports down,
And anger lends a short-liv'd frown.

SCOTT.

MISS LYDIA LANGUISH was near quarrelling with Captain Absolute on finding their parents favoured his views. On the same principle, Stockdale became an object of interest to Mary: Lady Elizabeth hourly forwarded his cause, by continually praising the Duke of Heitherdown, and lamenting, her darling Mary's thinking of uniting herself

with a mere country gentleman; when the duke, a conquest worthy of her highest ambition, was hers.

Her father continued silent; whilst Villars, the only person to whose dictating she would submit, advised her, if she approved of his character, his temper, and disposition, to meet her father's wishes, and marry him. As to his character, temper, and disposition, she could judge no further than from his manner of conducting himself in her presence: then his countenance was generally, except when she plagued him, dressed in smiles; and that she could plague, and make him jealous, gave her no uneasiness. It was at present her greatest amusement; heedlessly supposing, she could always as easily allay the storm as rise it. Sometimes, to torment Stockdale, she pretended to favour the duke. On these occasions, Lady Elizabeth treated Stockdale with slight, endeavouring to persuade her daughter, that as her consent

had never been obtained, she was still at liberty to dispose of her hand, and give her to his grace. Mary's consent she knew only was wanting, as Listowel still remained steady to his resolution of not interfering: he was a cool observer, and did not wish unnecessarily to interpose his authority; very well knowing his daughter's temper was too noble to marry for no other motive than to rank high in the peerage.

It happened one morning, that Mary had a slight disagreement with Stockdale, and, as usual, was flirting with the duke; playing for him all Stockdale's favourite songs; secretly enjoying her triumph in her lover's silence and gloomy looks. Towards the close of the day, Walter Belmont joined their party; his father had purchased him a cornetcy in the guards. He came now to show his new regimentals; which, he considered, rendered him irresistible, and that his lovely Mary could

no longer refuse a favourable answer to his protestations. He entered very *a-propos*, just as she was heartily tired of the part she had been acting. Relieved by his presence, she found amusement in his egotism and newly-acquired military ardour; her attentions raised his vanity still higher; he was sorry the duke left the room, and that there was only Stockdale left, who, he supposed was dying with envy at his success; and supposing his dress would render him as awful to the men, as it had rendered him charming to the fair sex, he strutted up to Stockdale, and with a glance of triumphant pity, observed, in an under voice, the tables were turned since last they met.

"I do not understand you, sir," replied Stockdale, fiercely.

Belmont ventured to return this glance, endeavouring, as Mary was present, to show some spirit.

Stockdale, soon perceiving his drift, treated him with the coolest contempt;

which Belmont not understanding, in a very blustering manner declared, that although when he was intended for the church, it was proper he should bear with patience 'the proud man's contumely,' and try, by a soft answer, 'to divert wrath.' now, that his destiny was changed, and he wore a sword, it was otherwise.

"You wear a sword!" replied Stockdale, laughing; "I will answer you as Themistocles did the Eretrien; and say, that you are like the fish that has a sword, but no heart."

"Do you mean to insult me, sir?" interrupted Belmont, laying his hand on the hilt of his sword, his face crimson with passion.

Mary was terrified.—"Do not," exclaimed she, gently catching hold of Stockdale's arm, "if you value my peace, enter into this foolish quarrel."

"Your peace!" returned Stockdale, "are you then thus interested for me?" The gloom instantly vanishing from his

countenance, he held her hand; she tried to extricate it, blushing deeply at the anxiety she had betrayed.

"This, Mr. Stockdale," said Belmont, trying to look courageous, "is no place for settling our dispute; while under the protection of that lady you are safe from my scorn;—you may therefore let go her hand—I intend you no injury."

Stockdale laughed, and was going to reply, but Mary commanded silence.—"If you talk in this manner, Mr. Belmont, you will oblige me to read the Riot Act."

"My interference, madam," said Belmont, angrily, "was solely to oblige you; as I considered he detained your hand against your inclination:—but, I see how it is—you have treated me most unhandsomely!"

"What an accusation!" returned Mary, laughing.

"Yes, madam; I have been now dancing attendance too long, giving up

my time;—nay, even my profession.—My inclination led me to choose the church; but no, forsooth, my mother said, that would not answer; the gravity of the black dress would not suit your lively disposition; and that all flirts, since the days of Pope, had a passion for a scarlet coat—but it's no matter, I will not break my heart for you—since you prefer the fox-hunter," said he, banging the door after him as he left the room.

Mary laughed heartily.—"He is gone," said she, "to complain to his mamma, whose darling he is; he has learned all her phrases; he will likewise complain to his brother Robert, who will make my mamma suppose that I have made sport of him; and I shall receive such a lecture," said she, drawing away her hand, which her lover still retained.

"No," said he, laying it on his heart, "I am indebted to this hand for much; —it first discovered that you were in-

terested for me; I will keep it, until you say what day you will make it mine."

"I believe I had better," said Mary, blushing; "I am tired of managing you all.—If I take you, I shall only have one grand *row* with mamma about the old duke.—I will tell her he had better wait until Frances is of a proper age."

"You charm me! may I acquaint your father you allow me to apply to him?"

"You may.—I wonder will he tell mamma? She will treat me very harshly when she hears it; I wish we could keep it a secret until we were married;—I should then laugh, to have her lecturing me every day for not being ambitious, and for refusing the duke; who, perhaps, if my mother raised his hopes, would open his coffers and give us a few balls. They say he will never, except on great occasions, see mortal in his house."

"My dear Mary, you cannot be serious?" said Stockdale, amazed.

"Why not, the duke is such a stingy person!"

"We will not, however, torment him Farewell, my best beloved! I am going to seek your father: remember, it is with your permission; and that you are not in my absence persuaded to give me up."

Mary smiled.—"You may trust me. The more I am opposed, the firmer I remain.—I will not, however, say a word to mamma; papa may break it to her."

Stockdale then went to seek Listowel; and, although elated at having at length obtained this permission, yet, his heart misgave him at the character she drew of herself; the words rung in his ears, 'The more I am opposed the firmer I remain.'

CHAPTER V.

"There is a strange kind of magic in some circumstances, that can thus alter the whole face of things."

Listowel did not urge Lady Elizabeth further in Stockdale's favour, until the departure of their guests; when they were all gone, he requested to speak to her in his study.

A dreadful scene ensued: Lady Elizabeth first tried prayers and entreaties; in reply to which he very reasonably urged, that they had both, in the commencement of his addresses, given Stockdale every encouragement, and that they were not now at liberty to refuse their consent. She would listen to no argument, overpowering her husband with

reproaches; saying, he considered her as a cipher in the family, and no more attended to her reiterated entreaties, than he did to the barking of a little dog. She then fell into violent hysterics. Fortunately, Stockdale and Mary had rode out. Listowel would have been sorry they had witnessed her ladyship's very great repugnance to the match, and he hoped in a few hours to pacify her.

This match appeared to Lady Elizabeth's jaundiced eye, but too faithfully, to point out the truth of Robert Belmont's assertions.

Listowel, who had left her for an hour, hoped now on his return to find her more reasonable. She listened to him with calmness; and appeared astonished, when he represented her brother's anxiety for their union.—"I am surprised," said she, "that Ardsallagh has not higher views for his niece, so handsome, so accomplished as she is;—but will you really dispose of our Mary, merely,

because you get a rich man to take her almost portionless?"

"I do not understand you, my love. Where will you meet a gentleman more refined—more enlightened than Stockdale?—He is rich certainly: but, is not that to our daughter's advantage?—As to what fortune we shall give, I want your advice, when you are a little more recovered; I have not mentioned the subject to him until we consult. He is so rich in love, that at present it is a matter of no moment to him."

"Still, sir, we are to consider what it is proper Mr. Stockdale should receive with a daughter of our house!" said she, with some asperity.

"Certainly, my love. By settlement she is entitled to five thousand pounds. Shall we double it?—I think that is the most we can do at present.—What do you say?"

Lady Elizabeth looked at him doubtingly; replying—"I think it will, pro-

vided we can do as much hereafter for Frances. How can you raise so much money?—Do you pay it down; or do you only encumber poor Edward?"

"I will pay him, if you think it not too much, five thousand pounds down; the other five thousand may remain as it is, still an incumbrance on the landed property; and he shall, until it is paid off, receive the interest.—What do you say?—Does this arrangement meet your approbation?"

"I am becoming more reconciled—if our child likes him.—Perhaps, lest she should form another low fancy, we had better let them marry.—Certainly her wild spirits and wilful disposition render her a great charge."

Thus, by degrees, Listowel made her more reasonable. He saw with surprise, that his giving Mary so good a fortune, evidently influenced her in giving her consent. Several things, she said, during their altercation, were quite unin-

telligible to him; and were spoken in a quick, sharp manner, as if meant utterly to confound him. Something of fancied importance, he was assured lay heavy on her mind. He hoped, when Mary was married, he should have more leisure to attend to her; and discover what caused this manner, so foreign to her nature.

Mary and Stockdale spent the morning in Dublin; he left her in Gardiner Street, with Louisa, promising to call for her in an hour.

The young friends were delighted to see each other; their affection was unabated. It gave Mary infinite pleasure to find Louisa in such good health and spirits; as she feared, from Edward's report, to have found her the reverse. She felt impatient to communicate to her the events that had occurred since they parted; and, when Mrs. Jackson left them, imparted to her wondering friend how she was situated with Stock-

dale; and candidly acknowledged her better judgment with respect to Villars. Louisa did not mention his having proposed for her; but sincerely congratulated her on her happy prospect. Time flew, and they had still much to say, when after an absence of two hours, Stockdale returned for his charge.

"We will visit you soon again," said Mary; "my uncle is dying to see you; as my aunt elect, Lady Rumbold, says you are the image of the Ardsallagh family, and of the Listowels: and, that if mamma had a child that did not resemble herself, she would think her a changeling left in your place. Heaven has destined you to be of our family.—You must, my dear Louisa! marry Edward.—What say you? will you fulfil your destiny?"

Louisa laughingly replied, she proposed too high an honour.

Mary was surprised, on her return, to find Lady Elizabeth reconciled to her

marriage with Stockdale; and that every obstacle in their way, had, during her ride, disappeared. She would, perhaps, from the volatility of her temper, have made new ones; but, the alarm she felt when there was danger of Stockdale's being engaged in a duel, with Louisa's remonstrances, kept her in bounds.

At a late hour they sat down to dinner: Stockdale recapitulated, for Lady Elizabeth's amusement, the events of the morning. He had never heard of the mystery attending Louisa, and therefore mentioned their visit to her, repeating Mary's observation and proposal: then,—and not till then, did he discover what a disagreeable subject he had chosen. Lady Elizabeth was red and pale with anger; whilst he saw Listowel was much agitated, and that Edward's cheeks were crimson. There was a painful pause in the conversation, until Lord Ardsallagh heedlessly continued it, declaring his curiosity to see this perfect resemblance of both families.

Lady Elizabeth, convinced her brother would not wilfully annoy her, concluded he and Stockwell were equally ignorant of her suspicions. This idea revived her drooping spirits, and gave her hopes, her wrongs, imaginary or otherwise, were not so generally known as she supposed. After listening some time to her brother, she replied to him —"Perhaps, after all, Mary is right, and that this young person is destined to belong to our family. What do you say, Mr. Listowel? Shall we allow Edward to marry her, and make her indeed our daughter."

Listowel forced a laugh, bowing his head in assent. She continued—

"What do you say, Edward? will you marry Louisa?"

"I am a most dutiful son; here, mother, is my hand; dispose of it as you please."

Lady Elizabeth kissed it affectionately.

"Yes, my dear Edward! you are all

your fond parents can wish; I do not believe you ever gave me an hour's uneasiness. At least you never gave me one angry feeling."

In the evening, Lord Ardsallagh followed his sister to her boudoir, congratulating her on her daughter's approaching nuptials, and confessing his own good fortune, in having engaged Lady Rumbold to give him her hand on the same day. This confession did not much surprise his sister, as she had long suspected their attachment.

CHAPTER VI.

"No random shot from Cupid's bow,
But by thy guidance, soft and slow,
It sunk within my heart:
Thus, Love being arm'd with Wisdom's force,
In vain I try to stop its course,
In vain repel the dart."

Mrs. Dunstanville was still necessarily detained in Dublin by her law-suit. She sent out her daughter with Sybella, in the carriage every day, either to amuse themselves, or to make purchases for the cottage; wishing as much as possible to divert Eleanor's mind, and banish the gloom still hanging over her spirits.

Talbot spent much of his time with them; his polite and fascinating manners charmed Mrs. Dunstanville. She remarked Eleanor was more cheerful in

his society; sometimes a playful smile embellishing her countenance.

Lord Ellismore, who was now residing at his family mansion, often came to town, and joined their social circle. Sybella was the only bar to the pleasure they felt in each other's company; fortunately she was frequently absent, as her return destroyed all conversation, her sarcastic wit sparing no one. She would sometimes point envenomed arrows, with an air of such simplicity, that only the person aimed at was sensible of her design; and, waging eternal war against a smiling countenance, she generally attacked those who appeared most cheerful.

The natural sourness of her temper was increased by her uncertainty about Charles Dunstanville. She had written to her father a most mischievous letter, twisting every circumstance that was possible, against her cousin; she felt proud of her performance, and pre-

sented it to her confidant for his perusal. He was astonished:—"If this reach your father in time, he will never receive him. I honour your magnifying imagination, and acknowledge myself to be in comparison, as dull as 'the fat weed that roots itself in ease on Lethe's wharf,'" said he, glancing over it again; "you have given him the most complete biographical sketch I ever read; exercising your fancy in filling up the chasm where facts were wanting.—This production raises your character highly in my estimation; I shall, in future, swear, 'by thy unfathomed gulfs of guile,' and I pronounce this," said he, returning her the letter, "a masterpiece of mischief."

"I knew you had a soul capable of feeling its merit; yours is the only kindred mind I ever met. As to my poor aunt, I dare not show it to her; not that she would *steadily* object to my sending it: she is too weak,—and is withheld

by her fear of the world, and of her would-be paragon, Miss Eleanor; I keep her in order: she is of that class of character who knows the best, and still the worst pursues."

"Can we be mistaken in Villars?"

"It is not possible!" said she with a smile of triumph; "I opened, and kept, a letter from him to Eleanor, it was merely a few lines; but I intend to form a plan for regularly intercepting their letters.—What makes me at present uneasy is, not hearing from Bernard, our butler, who I have engaged to write to me.—Why does he not let me hear of Charles's arrival? What if he should play me false!—the people there are all so bewitched with Charles,—that I sometimes tremble lest, for his sake, the old dotard should forget his own interest, and brave my vengeance. I sometimes think, were I on the spot my mind would not suffer so much. I cannot feel at home in this country.—Do you

think our plans would suffer by my returning immediately ?" said she, with an inquiring glance. His eye met her's, and reading her thoughts, he secretly smiled at her supposing herself an attaching object; but gratified her vanity, by pressing her stay in a very lover-like manner.

She therefore promised to remain until after Talbot's marriage, unless Charles's proceedings rendered her return necessary.

The Irish manners were extremely disagreeable to Sybella.—They appeared too happy—too much of heart in their language, with an ease, a lightness, a *jeu-d'esprit* that quite unnerved her: her bitterest sarcasm was answered with playfulness ;—or, perhaps, with archness sent back to herself; to one, who could least bear the smallest return.

She commissioned Eleanor's maid to make acquaintance with Brian. She employed her in preference to her own maid, judging, from her youth and

prettiness, she would have more chance of success. Mary Bolton was therefore well lectured by her mother; and knowing her reward would equal the intelligence she should bring, tried every effort to make Brian communicative. She prefaced by telling, as far as she knew, all her lady's secrets; expecting he would, in return, tell all his master's. But Brian was not like her, a mere hireling; he parried her questions with gaiety and acuteness, without betraying the least reluctance to answer;—in a moment seeing her drift, and giving her hopes, that when he should leave off *his joking*, she would gain the desired information: whilst he carefully treasured up every circumstance she related to tell *his honour;* who, he hoped, would see with half an eye what she *was after*, and instruct him how his honour would wish him to *humbug* her. Thus Talbot gained information of Eleanor's affections being engaged to her cousin. Still

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he had no suspicion that cousin was Villars.

Talbot was with Louisa whenever he could gain admittance, but her time was very much occupied by masters, and although Listowel gave every encouragement to Talbot's constant visits, still Mr. Kelly's injunction sunk deep within her. She knew he had such a refined mind, such a just way of thinking, with such simplicity of manners, that she could not feel happy if her conduct did not entirely square with his ideas of right. She heard from him constantly; he expressed himself much gratified by her new acquirements; hoping her friends not finding her deficient, would leave her no reason to regret having spent her early youth in seclusion with them; avowing, that they should ever look upon those years, when favoured with her presence, as the sunshine of their old age; that her letters still continued to cheer them, and was, next to

her presence, their greatest happiness; that as they could not, in the course of nature, long offer her a home, therefore, the seeing her acknowledged by her family, and in possession of independence, would take from them the severest sting of death.

The worthy couple were sincere in their protestations; there was no particle of selfishness in their dispositions: and although their greatest pleasure was her society, yet Mr. Kelly soon taught his partner to bear her absence with resignation. She found an interest in taking care of every thing that belonged to her: Louisa's garden was the first put in order; her pensioners were regularly visited; and her school was attended to by the old lady every day, where she would sit for hours with the children, listening to their anecdotes of their beloved young mistress. The entire management of this school had, by Listowel's desire, been long given to her.

One day, when Mrs. Kelly was sitting as usual, with the scholars, little Jenny Donahoe came running in; her eyes dancing with joy.—"Here, madam, here is a letter from Judine, *all the ways* from Dublin; *muther* sent it you."

Mrs. Kelly eagerly read it:

"My dear Muther,

"This coms hopping you are wel, "and that father is wel; not forgetting "litel shister Jinny. I am now a grate "many miles from yese all, and yet gets "my health remarkable wel, and so "does the pride of the world, dere Miss "*Lowsey*; although, as if our parson had "not made her an iligant scholard, she "is sometimes the liv long day at her "complishments, as they call them. "She has not near the fun I has; for "Brian, who is the best and quitest lad, "takes me to all the sights, and I will "make you burst laughing when I "return and tell you all ever I see.

" Miss *Lowsey* does not give his master
" near as much of her company. Brian
" says it is not genteel among the qua-
" lity; that they keep themselves to
" themselves; and it's not for the likes
" of them to be seen with men fellows.
" Oh, muther! you or father would not
" know me in my fine iligant clothes, all
" bran new, except a few bargains I got
" in Plunket Street. Indeed Miss *Lowsey*
" and Brian thinks me too flashy; but
" the other people tells me I looks
" mighty genteel. I am sending you all
" beautiful presents by Darby the car-
" man, as I have heaps of money, Mr.
" Talbot gives me a power, and so does
" Mr. Listowel; and my jewl, Miss
" *Lowsey*, advanced my wages, that I
" might have divarsion in town. She,
" the crature, dresses as plain as a
" quaker—she says it's not fit'n for a
" parson's datar to be dizen'd out. She
" is sending by Darby such heaps of
" presents, that my letter cannot con-

" tain I hope Darby's cart can. It's " the madam that will be snug when " she gets her pelis lined with fir; and " the parson when he gets into his asy " chair. My duty to my dady and " Jenny.

" I remain, dear muther,

" Your dutiful child,

" J. DONAHOE."

CHAPTER VII.

"Perish wealth, and power, and pride!
Mortal boons by mortals given;
But let constancy abide:
Constancy's the gift of Heaven!"

Lord Ellismore, when remonstrating with his son on the necessity of marrying Miss Dunstanville, was perfectly disinterested with regard to money matters, as he had lately been left a large property by a distant relation, from whom he had no expectation. On the morning his son went to Killarney, he received the express, acquainting him of his relation's death, and of his having left him heir to a landed property of five thousand pounds per annum, and fifty thousand pounds in the funds. On mature deliberation, he determined for some

time to conceal his relation's generosity from his son, lest it should prevent his making any effort to conquer his foolish attachment to the Kerry girl. He had never spoken to Mrs. Dunstanville on the subject of their children's marriage, since he was made acquainted with the deceit they had practised with regard to Ramsey's will; and should have felt himself bound in honour to reveal the secret to Miss Dunstanville; but, that he considered his son too romantic to marry without their affections being mutually engaged. He was, therefore, now very much elated on seeing them so constantly together, and on such good terms; ardently hoping she would gain his affections; but he was resolved she should enter into no engagement until she knew her liberty. He thought it, therefore, necessary to ask his son what his intentions were. Talbot seemed at a loss how to answer; which the Peer perceiving, relieved him, by saying—"I

see by your countenance you are wavering; I will not, therefore, at present receive your answer—not until the twenty-second of next October twelvemonth; but in the mean time, I insist on your making no overture to Miss Dunstanville without first informing me of your intention. I hope I may depend on you in this instance; and that you, Henry, know your father too well to suppose he makes you an idle request."

Talbot promised obedience; and as he could not be as communicative as his father wished, repressed all curiosity as to his motive for this injunction; although there was a smile and a look, that encouraged him to make an inquiry.—Lord Ellismore giving him this encouragement, lest his son should consider his motive too awful. It was his intention, before his son was of age, to make him acquainted with his acquisition of property, and Eleanor's liberty. He was extremely anxious that young lady

should be undeceived, feeling himself in some degree answerable for the deceit, and all its bearings.

Talbot was now in the habit of riding out with Eleanor. Knowing her affections were engaged, he every day felt more pleasure in her company. Sometimes he would read to her for hours, whilst she worked. On these occasions Sybella always left the room, never able to fix her attention to reading aloud, which, from her deafness, was not to be wondered at.

On one of these occasions, when Talbot had banished her, Eleanor desired him to close the book, as she had promised to pay a visit with Miss Listowel, who she expected every moment to call upon her. "Perhaps," said she, with a careless air, "you will come with us. I believe you know the young lady; you must have met her at Listowel Park, Miss Kelly." She paused a moment, and watched his varying countenance,

which was by his hand partly concealed, and then added, "Lord Ardsallagh accompanies us. I will presently put on my habit; our horses can meet us there."

"With pleasure," he replied, his countenance brightening. "I am most anxious," added he, hesitating and colouring, "for her to gain your approbation; but I am not apprehensive of her failing. She is a lovely young woman!—In disposition, you are the only person I know who at all resembles her: your manners are certainly more formed."—He ventured to glance at Eleanor, to see how she took those violent praises of another; and to see if there were no female jealousy, and love of conquest lurking in her eye. On the contrary, he saw pleasure repressed, and the tenderest interest light up her countenance. There was a silence whilst he was reflecting how it chanced Louisa could interest her. Eleanor seemed

buried in thought. Quickly recovering, she anxiously interrogated him, if he knew, certainly, where Sybella was; his reply that she was not in the house, and that he had from the window seen her in the street with Mrs. Dunstanville, appeared to give her great pleasure. Looking at him with some archness, she said:—"Since you know Miss Kelly so well, perhaps *you* can introduce me; Miss Listowel and Lord Ardsallagh can follow us; and," added she, smiling gaily, "your father and my mother, will be happy at your giving me this proof of your regard."

Talbot was amazed, scarcely knowing whether to understand her in jest or earnest; but from the goodnatured expression of her countenance, blended with archness, he saw in a moment she knew more of his story than he was aware of; it instantly occurred to him that Brian had been more communicative than he acknowledged.

Eleanor smiled at his inquiring look. At length she said—"Be not alarmed, my friend, at my knowing more of your *friendships* than you supposed: rest assured your secret is safe with me."

"Are you gifted with second sight?" said he, colouring, "I should have supposed your father's southern blood would have been a hindrance."

"No," replied Eleanor, "I do not pretend to more powers than a true southern."

"Perhaps," said he, smiling, "Bryan has been as communicative as——"

"As who? Pray tell me."

"Most willingly. Servants you know love talking; yours told mine, unasked —may I say it?—that I had a rival." (Eleanor smiled) "She pressed him very hard for my secrets, but the fellow is attached to me, and gave her no information. Our situation is peculiar, and so very similar, that we

ought surely to treat each other with perfect confidence.—There is one circumstance that, I fear, bars me from yours—you view me as a robber, determined on having your property."

"I have," returned Eleanor, "been led to think better of you.—Confess the truth: are you not often lectured on my account?—I sometimes fear you will hate me—that your heart will never soften towards me,—never feel towards me as your friend—as your sister."

"On the contrary," said Talbot. "I have feared that would be your feeling towards me. You have gained my sincerest friendship.—I admire your dutiful affection to your mother, that would have led you to sacrifice all your hopes of happiness for her sake.—In the first instance, I confess, I was amused at your patient endurance of me, and at your increasing esteem when you found I was not a lover. I am still at times amused: we appear on

such excellent terms, that my father and your mother are convinced we have taught our inclinations to yield to their good sense. It is necessary, therefore, that we should understand each other. In me, though no lover, you will find a true friend.—Can I serve you?—I wish your absent cousin would appear—else my father will consider him but as a man of the moon, and never let me give up the pursuit. But, if he claim you on an engagement prior to mine, my father would be too just to wish me to deprive you of your property."

"If you leave my mother out of it a handsome income, I will be satisfied," replied Eleanor.

"Can you make such a proposal? Do you really take me for a robber?" returned Talbot. "Were my heart free to select you, believe me, I would never sue for your fair hand, unless certain your affections were perfectly disengaged. The circumstance of your

cousin's will would have restrained me."

"You are indeed too generous," said his fair friend, "I must, however, be just, and obey my cousin's will; you do not, certainly," said she, smiling, "put me to the hard necessity of refusing you; although, by a few words, you could deprive me of my property, and then be enabled to follow your inclinations in marrying the lady of your choice, even with your father's approbation: for then, I presume, the only objection to her alliance would be done away; my forfeited fortune removing all your difficulties. We had better, therefore, come to an agreement, and employ some clever lawyer to divide the property, which is sufficiently ample to provide for us both."

"Oh, never! I could not.—Besides, I understand you would have accepted me," said Talbot. "Under that conviction I was silent."

"It never was my intention to deceive you.—Circumstances have, however changed me," returned Eleanor.

"What! did I become every day more disagreeable to you?"

"On the contrary," replied Eleanor, smiling, "every day more amiable: I am now interested in your happiness, as if you were my brother, particularly since I heard your affections were engaged."

"Who did you hear this from?" demanded Talbot.

"From my dearest friend," returned Eleanor.

"Who is he?—Have you heard from your cousin?"

"Hush! I have seen him. He first taught me properly to estimate your character, and how much I had to hope from your generosity."

"I do not know him: You are the first Dunstanville I ever saw."

"What a fib you tell!" said she, with an arch smile, "when, in this very

house you recommended him to marry me!"

"Hah! is it possible! Can Villars and Dunstanville be one? I read it in your blushes.—Oh! here is our torment. Shall I order our horses? We have still much to say."

Sybella now entered, and looking at them, exclaimed—"Eternallyt ogether! —a pigeon that will find a mate in any bird that will coo!" This was said sneeringly at Eleanor, and a strong emphasis laid on the word pigeon.

"I do not know, Sybella, why you make a pigeon of me? Without having recourse to that, you have always found me willing to sacrifice my wishes to yours!"

Sybella turned pale, but recovering, said—"I know not what you allude to, madam: nor can I bring to my recollection one voluntary sacrifice you ever made to my wishes."

Eleanor smiled rather sarcastically.

"What, madam!" said Sybella, rudely seizing both her hands, and fixing her grey eyes on Eleanor's alarmed countenance, as she roared out at the height of her discordant voice—"Have you had any conversation with your mother? Did she betray me?"

"In what?" said Eleanor, with a look, in which terror and curiosity were strongly blended.

"Do you think," said the enraged maiden, flinging her from her, "that I will betray myself?—If I find *she* has, my present vengeance will pursue you both!"

"Oh, Sybella, do not frighten my mother!—I solemnly protest she has made me no communication."

"Promise me you will not question her; she never could resist your artful blandishments."

"I promise you," returned Eleanor. "To secure her peace I would for

ever forego the gratifying my curiosity, which, I confess, you have powerfully excited."

"Then no bounds will restrain you," said Sybella.

"If you knew how dear my mother is to me you would not say so. Let me go—here is Miss Listowel!" Quickly recovering from her alarm, she said, with an arch glance at Talbot, "You see how I can be governed by terror; pray do not hereafter take advantage of this."

Sybella's rage was considerably increased by Talbot's being witness to this scene, and she hated Eleanor more than ever.

Mary and her party now came to seek Eleanor, to accompany them in their visit to Miss Kelly. To their dismay, Sybella asked in the softest tone she could assume, if she might be allowed to go with them.

Mary unwillingly assented, and en-

deavoured to conceal her chagrin. Sybella went to prepare.

On her return, Robert Belmont was there, looking very important. He requested Sybella would defer her visit: "For," said he, "Mrs. Jackson's small apartment cannot contain us all."

Mary could scarcely believe her happiness in so easily shaking off the two plagues. The gentlemen laughed, and wondered at Belmont's choosing such a cross, ugly *tête-à-tête* companion; they, however, all remarked he paid her great attention; and supposed the report of her large fortune had reached his ears.

CHAPTER VIII.

Now, by her virgins, as a bride array'd
Bright as the day, and lovely as a roe,
That feeds on lawns where only roses blow,
Deckt for the feast appears the radiant maid.
OBERON.

LISTOWEL, on Louisa's arrival in Dublin, gave her a very ample allowance; paying her the first year in advance, which she did not refuse, that she might have the pleasure of sending handsome presents to the Kellys, and providing for the widows and orphans under her immediate care. She expended very little on her dress, judging, whilst unacknowledged by her relations, it should be as plain as possible. This instance of her propriety

of conduct gave Listowel particular pleasure, hoping, from her withstanding the powerful temptation of hats, feathers, and fine dresses, that she had escaped the family foible; or, at least, that vanity was not the predominant feature of her character.

Louisa continued to attend diligently to the finishing her education: the time not thus occupied was spent with Talbot and Edward; sometimes Doctor Berry joined their parties, Listowel seldom; judging his being there would needlessly exasperate Lady Elizabeth, and that it was expedient he should for a time forego the pleasure of her society.

Mary and Stockdale visited her whenever they came to Dublin, and had prepared her to expect a visit on this day from Lord Ardsallagh, Lady Rumbold and Eleanor.

Louisa dressed herself as usual in a white muslin; plain, unadorned, emble-

matical of the purity and simplicity of her character, and suited to the alabaster fairness of her complexion; to which, her raven hair formed a brilliant contrast. She tried to adjust her glossy, luxuriant ringlets, like Lady Elizabeth Listowel's, innocently hoping to make her resemblance to her ladyship more apparent,—for, beautiful as she considered Mary, it always caused her a severe pang when their likeness was mentioned.

At length the rap was heard at the hall door, announcing the expected company's arrival. Louisa trembled, and turned pale, looking to Mrs. Jackson for support and protection; feeling those strangers were led to visit her more from curiosity, than from respect or regard; her heart beat quick, as she heard them approach, and she summoned all her courage to support their scrutiny. Mary was the first to enter, and embracing her affectionately, said—"I hope, my dear Louisa, you will not think me

too unreasonable in bringing you so many of my friends; here they are,—I am no witch if they are not shortly yours." She then in a sportive manner, presented them all to her and Mrs. Jackson.

Louisa for a moment was covered with blushes, but her manners were naturally too calm, and too self-possessed for the novelty of her situation, to betray her into any awkwardness.

Louisa's beauty was of that kind, that went directly to the heart, charming either by the engaging modesty of her countenance, or by the spirit and intelligence that was drawn out by conversation. Eleanor almost felt a jealous pang, and feared that fair creature rivalled her, perhaps more than Dunstanville chose to acknowledge.

Before their departure, Mary drew Louisa aside, to tell her every arrangement was in forwardness for her marriage; and to request, that as soon as

she was settled at Drummore, she would pay her a visit. This invitation was gratefully accepted.

Lord Ardsallagh highly gratified Louisa, by observing, that Miss Kelly's resemblance to his sister was much stronger than to Mary. Talbot agreed with him; at the same time wondering it had never before appeared to him so marked; Louisa smiled, but did not discover how she had made it so conspicuous. They soon after took leave, Eleanor, who was to remain in town some days longer, promised to call again.

Preparations were now making at Holly Mount, for the double wedding. Lady Rumbold was on a visit with the Belmonts, their lodge was only two miles distant; the families were constantly together, and when the Dunstanville's took possession of their cottage, pleasantly situated between Holly Mount and Lord Ellismore's fine domain, they

every day made parties to see the country, and generally concluded the evening at Holly Mount, or Lord Ellismore's.

Mrs. Belmont was proud of having a titled lady her guest. "Absolutely, "my dear," she said, when writing to Lady Wilmot, "her ladyship is an in- "mate of our house, and is as quiet and "easy as if it was yourself; who cer- "tainly are a lady too, but your hus- "band is no lord, as her's was; and she "is to have another lord for her husband, "and is, besides, the mother of a lord; "but, as I was saying, she is quiet and "easy; but not so her woman, who is "as troublesome a wench as ever en- "tered a house. 'Oh! *mem*,' said she "to me, on their first coming, 'I always "*has* a fire in my room, and *I'se* cannot "bear the *windor* open; as I have the "*rheumatis* in my *harm*, and the *hair* "always brings it on.' Thus she goes "on, like all the folks on the other side "of the water, clipping the king's Eng-

" lish; and then she has such *blarney*
" to her lady—her lady the countess
" that is to be. Well, my dear Jem, if
" I had not the luck to be the mother
" of simpletons, I know who would now
" be the Countess of Ardsallagh—*your*
" *sister Car.*; he admired her, and would
" have sought her hand, but for her
" foolish attachment to that colonel.—
" She was never as *bidable* as you, when
" you gave Seymour *the belt*, and se-
" cured for yourself such grandeur: and
" then Lady Rumbold was as sly as
" *any thing*, and before I could look
" about me, *snapt him up;* however,
" *Car.* is to be married the same day
" with them all; and by the bishop too;
" it will be quite elegant, and will make
" such a charming paragraph in the
" morning paper,—our *Car.* cutting as
" fine a flourish as any of *'em.*"

At length the happy day arrived, and the lovely Mary plighted her faith to the enraptured Stockdale. Before the

ceremony was quite over, Lady Elizabeth went into the most interesting hysterics. On her recovery, the maturer Lady Rumbold was handed out by the Lord Ardsallagh; his tender sister's feelings again overpowering her; thus, displaying her interest for their happiness, and the sensibility of her nature. She was taken away by her attentive husband, before the sentimental *Car.* was led to the altar by her adoring colonel.

Mrs. Belmont was in great glee, and said, "Indeed, it was a mighty pretty sight, and that she wondered how her ladyship took on so; this was not her first time for disposing of a daughter, so she was not so nervous; besides, her *Car.* was no chicken; it was time she should leave her protecting wing, where she had nestled so long." Yet, notwithstanding this boast, whilst the ceremony was performing, unbidden tears, like an April shower, would come down her face, in

which was expressed joy and triumph, at the completion of her wishes, tempered by the solemnity of the scene, and anxiety for her daughter's happiness.

The ceremony being over, they returned to Holly Mount; where, after partaking of an early dinner, the bridal party set out for their respective homes.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Her schemes defeated, and her labours crost."

Sybella, expressing great impatience for her cousin's marriage, urged Mrs. Dunstanville to oblige Talbot to declare his sentiments; alleging the young couple were on terms that would render her interference acceptable; and that, if their intended union was immediately announced to their families, Sybella might justly hope, before her father was softened towards Charles Dunstanville, to prevail on him, if Charles still persisted in refusing to marry her, to settle the whole of his property on her, his right heir. Mrs. Dunstanville spoke to

Lord Ellismore on the subject, expressing her happiness at the probability of their children being so speedily united.

"You alarm me, my dear madam!" said Lord Ellismore.—"Did Sybella ever make a proposal that would give pleasure? Would she not sooner sacrifice her own interest? But, I think with you, we must be very much deceived in our children if they are not devoted to each other. Notwithstanding, my certainty of this, I feel great compunction in allowing you, for my sake, to continue to deceive Eleanor; and I have wished some time for an opportunity to tell you how I have settled it with my conscience!"

"For heaven's sake! my dear sir! surely you do not mean to betray me! What will become of me! Who will protect me from my furious niece?"

"Protect you!—what can you fear? Surely you are not in her power? In this instance she is as much in yours."

Mrs. Dunstanville coloured like scarlet, and was silent.

Lord Ellismore looked at her in amazement, half suspecting that much more of the mystery remained to be unravelled; and that his fair friend had only made him a half confidant. He felt disgusted by her duplicity, and expressed no curiosity, lest she should force him either to take an active part in their cabals, or give up the alliance. After a pause, distressing to the conscious Mrs. Dunstanville, he resumed:—"Let me now explain to you how I have settled with Henry; he will be of age next October twelve months; I have desired him, on no account, to seek for your daughter's consent until then!"

"Why the delay?"

"Were he to ask her now," said Lord Ellismore, "she might accept him from duty; but what would her feelings be on discovering the imposition?—What chance would they have of domestic

happiness? Would not her former repugnance return? She would regard us all with abhorrence. Oh! no! my dearest madam, she shall never receive my son's addresses until she knows her liberty; and the only advantage, I shall, in this instance, draw from your friendship, is the disposing her mind to view him favourably, and indulging him with her company."

"That is one objection my niece makes to the long continuance of the courtship; and says, we should not allow of such constant *tête-à-tête* walks and rides."

"If such be your objection, I will send him for a few months to the Continent; and on his return he may try his fortune with your lovely Eleanor; whom, independent of her fortune, I would choose before any one I know, for my daughter-in-law."

"Do you not think her very like what I was at her age?" inquired Mrs. Dun-

stanville, knowing her pretensions were much higher.

Lord Ellismore smiled;—"I am not a fair judge. My dear madam! I viewed you with a lover's eye; I was taken with your beauty, which was more touching than your daughter's."

"Indeed! do you think so?"

"Your youth, your innocence, and confiding manners likewise attracted me. —I was not then a competent judge of characters, and could not then have studied yours, as I have done Eleanor's."

"She has more firmness than I have," said Mrs. Dunstanville, thoughtfully; "my angel child always acts from principle, just like her father; but his was of a sterner cast: and yet, I dread her censure when she discovers the deceit; she will find no corresponding weakness in her own breast to excuse me.—It was our intention she should never be undeceived.—I dread Sybella; but, at least, if you will wait until your son's

return, she may then be in England, and every thing may go on smoothly."

"I promise I will be silent on the subject, until the day my son completes his one-and-twentieth year."

Lord Ellismore that evening arranged every thing with his son, for making a Continental tour; at Paris he was to spend the ensuing Winter. In the Spring he was to visit Rome, and remain in Italy until the following Summer; when he was to be allowed to return home, and claim Eleanor's fair hand. His departure was a cause of sorrow to her. She loved him with the truest affection, and through his means enjoyed more liberty than she could hope for in his absence. 'Who, now, would take her to see Louisa; or, to whom could she talk of her cousin Dunstanville;' whose letters surprised her, they were so short, so cold, so unlike his usual style. Yet, still she continued regularly to answer these laconic epistles, although, in re-

turn, her letters were scarcely noticed; and, to her request, that he should return immediately, no answer was given. She supposed he was then in London, Talbot, she hoped, would see him there, and explain to her this seeming mystery.

CHAPTER IX.

"Now hoist the sail, and let the streamers float
Upon the wanton breezes. Strew the deck
With lavender, and sprinkle liquid sweets,
That no rude savour maritime invade
The nose of nice nobility!"

The loss of Mary's society was deeply felt at Holly Mount and its neighbourhood. They had no longer constant parties, and when they did meet, their animation and spirit seem to have fled with her. Listowel devoted his entire time to Lady Elizabeth, indulging her every wish, excepting her inclination to bring Frances forward, and nourish the vanity, he was grieved to see, had taken such deep root in that interesting child.

She had no kind friend, like Villars, to step between her and folly; but was left to the tutelage of a woman, whose wrong-headedness he knew to be her least imperfection. He was perpetually led to mourn over these disadvantages; he saw his almost infant daughter already looked round to catch the approving glances of strangers; and her little eyes danced with pleasure, when excellence, in any of her performances was acknowledged, or brought forward for exhibition. 'What was to be done?' was Listowel's constant anxiety. How dismiss a governess, whom, from long habit, his wife was become attached to; and, who every day presuming on this partiality, was extending her influence in the family; and of late acting the part of *toad-eater* to her ladyship. He at length decided on parting with her, having of late observed she held long and frequent private conferences with Robert Belmont. That young man was become

intolerable to him: he believed him to be totally without principle, without one bright point in his character, interest alone restraining his conduct; and that, not capable of feeling the gratitude due from him to the Listowel family, he was a very dangerous companion for his innocent wife. After mature deliberation, he considered it would be his wisest plan again to revisit the Continent. He knew Lady Elizabeth would willingly consent, as her brother and sister-in-law were to go the following Spring, according to Lady Ardsallagh's request: who proposed taking this trip, in order, a little longer, to defer the alarming epoch of presenting to him her tall daughters. She contrived, a little before their arrival in Dublin, to have them settled at Rumbold Hall, with their governess; the boys were at school.

As Listowel expected, Lady Elizabeth was delighted with the prospect

of once more revisiting the Continent. This pleasure was, however, clogged with two conditions. He purposely avoided further explanation, until she had talked their plans over with the Ardsallaghs, who were now on a visit to them, on their way to Bath, where they were to spend a few months before they set out on their tour. When all was arranged for accompanying them, and he was certain his wife's heart was set on going, he ventured to mention one of the conditions; that she should part with Madame, and place Frances again in the charge of Mrs. Damor, the governess formerly procured for her by Doctor Berry; whom he knew to be a woman of strict principles and steady manners. He promised, she should, during their absence, have the best masters to attend her. Lord Ardsallagh was entirely of Listowel's opinion, that Madame should go; judging from what came under his

own observation, and from what Mary told him, of her method of instructing. The second sacrifice he demanded was, that Robert Belmont should no longer be in her train. Outrageous at this proposal, she declared that she would not go. Listowel refused to take her answer for four-and-twenty hours; and her friends not knowing she had it in contemplation not to go, spoke as usual of her accompanying them. Fearing, therefore, they might consider her changed plan proceeded from a deeper feeling than pique, she no longer hesitated to consent: particularly, as at home or abroad, Belmont was equally forbidden her presence. This would have been a most mortifying measure, and might, she feared, turn the tide of popular opinion against her: and, on reflection, she felt conscious that his attentions had been more pointed than she had ever suffered from any other man; and she was herself startled, on recalling to mind how ten-

der and frequent their *tète-à-tètes* had become. She could not wonder that the green-eyed monster had alarmed her husband, and poisoned his mind towards her young friend. Listowel promised to receive him, as usual, whilst they remained in Ireland; and, in order to shorten the time, proposed they should spend the Winter in Bath with the Ardsallaghs.

Lord Ardsallagh expressed great impatience to see his step-children; and, since that was not compatible with his present plans, he arranged, that the Miss Rumbolds should be brought to Dublin in the Spring, and have the advantage of the first masters.

Accordingly, as soon as the necessary preparations could be made, they went to Bath. Stockdale and Mary promised to follow, and to be of their party.

Poor Louisa was now very impatient to leave Dublin, as she had lost the society of those who rendered her stay there

agreeable. She was deeply afflicted at Listowel's departure; not so much from being deprived of his society, but that he carried her secret with him. His return she considered very uncertain, and that in the mean time she should be left to languish in doubt and uncertainty. Her fading colour and declining appetite again alarmed her friends. Doctor Berry was shocked on perceiving the change; which he attributed entirely to uneasiness of mind. Whilst he saw her happy and blooming, he patiently submitted to Listowel's wishes; but now, that he saw her drooping like a flower, whilst, with a mournful fortitude she vainly attempted to conceal, from her anxious friends, the unhappiness that preyed on her, he thought her the most interesting object he had ever beheld, and severely condemned his own weakness, in continuing to keep a secret that made so superior a mind miserable.

He wrote a very warm remonstrance

to Listowel, who was then at Bath; representing, as Louisa was every thing the proudest parents could wish, the farce had been sufficiently kept up; and what reason had he now for continuing her in banishment, when he might so implicitly rely on the firmness of her character: the principles she had imbibed in early youth he saw were never to be eradicated.

Listowel, in his answer, allowed the justness of his remarks; but, at the same time, in apology for persevering in his secluding plan, pleaded, that were he now to restore her to her mother, she would be hurried into a vortex of dissipation, from which no objection on her part could save her. He long had a watchful eye over her, and knew her affections to be engaged to Talbot. At present it was not in that excellent young man's power to claim her hand; which he knew was his intention, as soon as he could, with honour, extricate himself from the engagement

his father had formed: then, and not until then, was the time for him to step forward, and proudly present his daughter to an admiring world; and give her the only advantages she could at present want in Lord Ellismore's eyes. Looking forward to that day was his solace in all his present troubles; and so far from anticipating reproaches, he felt, the presenting her to her mother, untainted with the family foible, would be the proudest moment of his life. For the attainment of this promised happiness, he and his beloved child were now both suffering; but his spirits were supported by the hope, that he was securing her happiness on a firm basis.

It was his first wish to alleviate, as much as possible, her sufferings; and he hoped the doctor would give her every indulgence that did not militate against, what he considered, her true interest; he also expected his friend, Mrs. Jackson, would devote herself entirely to

her welfare. Enclosed was a letter to Louisa, in which he exhorted her to bear with resignation the suspence she was unavoidably kept in; desiring she should consider Doctor Berry as her father's most attached friend, and to whom she might speak freely on every subject.

This letter was a great consolation to Louisa. The first opportunity she had of speaking to the doctor alone, she took advantage of the permission granted, and hoped from him to gain some information of her parents. But on that head he was as impenetrable as Listowel himself, although appearing very anxious to restore her peace of mind. He recommended her immediate change of air, the weather being damp and foggy. He presented her to his father and sister, who gave her and Mrs. Jackson a pressing invitation to visit them at their country residence, previous to their return to Listowel

Glebe. Louisa liked their manners, and joyfully accepted their invitation. Her spirits were likewise raised at this juncture, by receiving a letter from Mary, expressing her regard, and her wish to see her at Drummore, before her departure for the Continent.

Louisa hoped Eleanor would call before she left town. The doctor explained to her how Eleanor was watched by her dwarfish cousin, but promised, if possible, to bring them together.

The good doctor found this a more difficult task than he was aware of, her Argus-eyed rival scarcely ever allowing her to quit the cottage without her. As Lord Ellismore sometimes drove to Dublin in his curricle, Eleanor thought her only plan would be to accompany him ; she therefore requested he would have the goodness to take her with him the next time he drove out, pretending to have taken a great fancy to an open carriage; on which

Lord Ellismore gallantly proposed calling on her the next day. He did so, and they took a very pleasant drive. Her mother, delighted at her returning with improved looks and spirits, requested Lord Ellismore would often call on her. Sybella would, if possible, have prevented her taking these drives, lest they should prove inimical to her plans, in giving Eleanor an opportunity of meeting people without her knowledge. She well knew that Eleanor had no intention of being united to Talbot, and that if once Dunstanville claimed her hand, she never could, for any length of time, succeed in prejudicing her father against him. Every thing was then to be done before their intention was discovered, and whilst her father had still hopes of his being his son-in-law.

CHAPTER XI.

"Thy parting glance which fondly beams
An equal love may see:
The tear that from thine eye-lid streams
Can weep no change in me."

Eleanor having heard from Doctor Berry of Louisa's intention to quit town, determined to ask Lord Ellismore to take her to Dublin, and meditated how, without an appearance of mystery, she could give him to understand her watchful cousin was not to know the object of their drive. She was spared this trouble when next he called, by his proposing, on handing her into the carriage, to drive there, if she did not consider it too distant. She assured him to the contrary, and desiring the woman at the gate, if she did not return

before the last dinner bell rung, to let her mother know she was gone for a distant drive, and probably would be detained until six or seven o'clock in the evening; but charged the woman, on no account, to mention until then the message she had given. Lord Ellismore smiled;—"If Henry," said he, "had been in my place, they would have supposed you were eloping, and allowing yourself a certain time for escape." Eleanor, colouring deeply, was silent, whilst she lamented Sybella's forcing her to assume the appearance of an artful character, so foreign to her open, ingenuous disposition.

Lord Ellismore, on their arrival, left her at the doctor's, promising to call for her in two hours. She went from thence to visit Louisa, with Miss Berry, the doctor's sister, an elderly lady of very pleasing manners; who, judging the young ladies would wish for private conversation, left her at the door, promising to call for her before Lord Ellismore's return.

Mrs. Jackson not being at home, Eleanor at once imparted to Louisa her uneasiness at not hearing from Dunstanville. It was now some time since he had written, and those letters she did receive were common place, conveying no intelligence; merely giving her the satisfaction of knowing he was in England, and in health. Louisa tried to console her, saying, Talbot would make it his business to find out where he was, and the reason of his writing such extraordinary letters.

"He promised me he would do so; but, if Charles again suffers himself to be imposed on, what confidence can I feel in his attachment; and why pass over my requesting his return in silence," said Eleanor, fixing her eyes mournfully on Louisa, and bursting into tears.

Louisa tried to compose her, and expressed her fear that some fresh grief agitated her, and begged to know if it were in her power to serve her.

"I do not deserve your pity, my dear Louisa!" said Eleanor, tenderly pressing her hand, and concealing her face, whilst she made a mortifying confession: "A most horrible jealousy was that moment poisoning my mind; you looked so beautiful, so brilliant; and you know," added she, in a low tone, "at one time you drew him from me."

"Oh! never, my dear friend! I am so happy you have mentioned what was passing in your thoughts, that I may explain to you how he ever came to think of me," said Louisa; who then gave her a full detail of the progress of their acquaintance, and it did not require much rhetoric to convince Eleanor, that it was circumstances, and not attachment, led Villars to make that proposal for her to Mr. Kelly.

Judith here interrupted them, to say, there was a lad in the hall wanting to see Miss Dunstanville, and not Miss Sybella. "I am certain by his talk,"

said she, "he *comed* from foreign parts, —from England."

"Who can it be? Is he veryyoung?" inquired Eleanor.

"As smart a lad as you would desire to see of a Summer's day," replied Judith, "near-hand about fifty."

Eleanor smiled, and observed, in England they had a more juvenile idea of a lad.

"Well, be he man or boy, I *tould* him you were not the *tother* Miss; who, indeed, has never darkened our doors but once, that she came peering about. She watched, until Miss *Lowsey* was engaged, to put her nose into every hole and corner, and behind the big *Inden* screen; and when she was going down stairs, she *rammed* herself into the closet there, where I *keeps* my *tay things;* and *axing* me all the questions, without hearing ever a word of my answers."

"Did the man say what was his business with me?" said Eleanor eagerly.

"No, miss, he did not; he must see *yourself*, he said, and that he had crossed the *say*, and travelled day and night to do your pleasure," replied the waiting-maid.

"Pray show him up.—Louisa, have I your permission?"

A decent country-looking man now made his appearance, with an honest intelligent countenance, beaming with pleasure at seeing his young lady.

"Is it you, Robert?" exclaimed Eleanor. "What has brought you to Ireland?—Is my uncle well? Has no mischief happened?"

"No, my dear young lady! all are well. I *comes* not about my own business; but—" he hesitated. "I fear, indeed, you will not be pleased with me; but what could I do?—You know what obligations I am under to Master Charles—"

"What!—Do you come from him?"

"He said I would do him the greatest

service in the world if I would just come over to *this here* outlandish country, and deliver into your own hands a letter of his inditing."

"Oh! give it me!" said Eleanor, eagerly taking it from him.

"I have been here now near-hand two months, trying to get a sight of you without the little miss at your side," said the Englishman.—"I might have gone on losing my time, for a long day, if the good doctor had not taken notice of my always *hankering* after your carriage whenever you came to town; and on my writing that to Master Charles, he told me I might ask his advice.

Eleanor did not know a word he said, she was so engrossed by the letter, until he mentioned writing to Dunstanville; she therefore determined to send her answer by him; and then dismissing him, requested he would not leave the house until she saw him again. The letter run thus:—

"I do not, my dearest Eleanor! feel "a doubt, but that Sybella either dic- "tates or fabricates the cold laconic "epistles I receive in your hand writing, "signed with your name, and sealed "with your seal, '*La Fortune est incon-* "*stante*,' coming in so unquestionable a "shape, that if I did not feel the firmest "reliance in your truth and constancy, "I should be a most miserable wight. "But, notwithstanding my suspicions of "unfair dealing, I wrote as usual, only "taking care my letter should convey "no useful information. We had better "continue to do so, as it will effectually "lull their suspicion of our having ano- "ther mode of intercourse.

"In my first letter I asked a question, "to which I knew no one but yourself "could give an answer; its import, ap- "parently so trifling, that I judged if "they made you out a letter from mine, "it would be omitted. Accordingly, "receiving no answer to my question, I

" wrote most guardedly; and therefore " now indulge in minutely detailing " every thing that has happened since " we parted.

" I will not dwell on my miserable " feelings on leaving you; nor on the " various emotions that rose in my breast " on returning to my uncle, who had " once so fondly loved me.

" I travelled by the name of Villars, " and still continued it when announced " to him. I was shown into the library. " Oh! what recollections came throng- " ing to my mind!—How often, when a " boy, have I been called into that " room to receive lectures on Sybella's " complaints!—and how often, when " pushing me in, has she soundly boxed " my ears. The very view of this apart- " ment struck me with awe, and in- " creased the heavy forebodings of my " heart. My uncle was not there—the " room was only occupied by a terrier, " ill-favoured, and of stunted growth.

" I fancied it was animated by Sybella's
" fiery, venomous spirit. It flew at me,
" barking and growling, receiving me as
" a most unwelcome intruder. In vain I
" endeavoured to pacify it; a desperate
" battle was beginning, when my uncle
" appeared. Venerable old man! I was
" shocked on seeing the change time had
" wrought since last we met. I flew
" forward to meet him—for the moment,
" in my joy at seeing him, forgetting the
" terms we were on. He appeared, from
" agitation, scarcely able to stand, yet,
" not unmindful of my disgrace. 'Young
" man,' said he, motioning me back,
" 'why this show of tenderness for one
" that you have deserted—whose old
" age you have embittered; making him
" feel how sharper than a serpent's
" tooth is a child's ingratitude?'

" The paleness of my countenance, I
" believe, alarmed him.—I could not
" speak, but supported myself against
" a book-case, whilst he continued

" enumerating the consequences of my
" crimes; dwelling on my loss of his
" property; and that, in disobliging him,
" I had offended all my relations.

" During this harangue I rallied my
" spirits:—my pride rose, and I felt
" degraded at showing so much emotion
" for one that could suppose me mer-
" cenary. I therefore replied, with some
" firmness, that I sought his presence
" merely from affection, and gratitude
" for the kindness and partiality he once
" showed me; that I never coveted his
" property; and that since my relations
" were so ready to cast me off, it be-
" hoved me to double my exertions for
" independence; and as my presence
" seemed only to occasion him bitter
" recollections, I should, wishing him
" every blessing, return to the inn.

" 'Impatient, I see as formerly!—Rash
" young man! Will you again, with such
" ease, tear yourself from me? And yet,
" I must let you go. At least, let these

" old eyes dwell a little longer on your " countenance, and see how time has " matured the graces of boyhood.' He " approached me—his eyes filled with " tears; and in a softer voice, whilst " strong emotion seemed to check his " utterance, he continued: ' Thus my " brother, my beloved brother! looked " when we were both young men, set- " tling in life. Oh, Charles! I expected " you would have watched my declining " age; with a son's love have received " my parting breath; and then have " been as a father to my poor tenantry.'

" Dearest uncle! you have my love, " my duty, except on one point, said I, " involuntarily approaching nearer, and " offering my hand. My poor uncle " could hold his displeasure no longer. " He caught my hand, and falling on " my neck, embraced me, and wept. " We were both much agitated.

" When a little composed, he acknow- " ledged that Sybella prepared him to

" expect me under the name of Villars;
" and had charged him, as he valued the
" family honour, to insist on my still
" concealing myself; for that, if you,
" my dear Eleanor! knew I was alive,
" you would forget every tie that bound
" you to Talbot; plunge your mother
" in poverty, and become my wife. She
" likewise declared in this artful epistle,
" that her love for me was greater than
" ever; and entreated he never would
" forgive, or admit me into his presence,
" unless I promised to become her hus-
" band. He almost smiled when men-
" tioning the alternative.

" I inquired what was his pleasure?
" He could not, he said, drive me
" from his presence; he wished me to
" remain *incog.*; still by the name of
" Villars, until you were married.

" Shortly after my arrival, my uncle
" had another letter from his daughter,
" written in a great rage, at his suffering
" me to continue there; and threaten-

" ing, if I did not immediately withdraw,
" she would return. My poor uncle
" was, therefore, obliged to consent to
" my departure. He was, however,
" quite softened in my favour; listening,
" with an attentive ear to the story of
" my wrongs. He no longer blamed
" our mutual attachment; and said,
" were you not so tied up by your
" cousin's will, he would with pleasure
" see us united. That he never would
" again ask me to marry his daughter;
" acknowledging he had long ceased to
" consider her as such, but as a fiend
" sent to torment him, her temper was
" so bad; and he discovered her to be of
" such a tricky disposition, and so full
" of mischief.

" He wished me to return to the Con-
" tinent, and amuse myself in travel for
" a few years; but would not hear of my
" again entering any family in a depen-
" dant situation; or, at present, of my
" entering any profession.

" I could not reply to my dear uncle " until I heard from you, or Talbot, to " know how far you would allow me to " represent your actual situation; which " I hoped would induce him to recal his " sentence of banishing me to the Con- " tinent. It therefore occurred to me " to seek out a trusty person, that would " deliver you a letter unobserved by " Sybella.

" You know how uncommonly at- " tached Robert Dingle has been always " to me;—the poor fellow was delighted " to have it in his power to serve me; " —he leaves this early to-morrow " morning.

" I write from *****, White Lion Inn. " Yesterday evening I observed my " uncle was unusually low. We did " not separate until a late hour:—he " pressed my hand when bidding me " good night; and the tears, which he " vainly attempted to conceal, trickled " down his benign countenance!—He

" brushed them away, and assuming
" some firmness, again bid me good
" night; leaving me before I could
" express my amazement at his agita-
" tion. My brain was on fire!—'Oh!'
" thought I, 'Eleanor is married, and
" he fears breaking it to me!' I flew to
" my chamber; on the dressing-table
" was a packet addressed to myself, in
" our dear uncle's hand-writing!—With
" trembling hands I broke the seal. I
" send it enclosed.—Read it before you
" proceed further.

" 'DEAREST NEPHEW,

" 'Finding myself unequal to take
" leave of you, whom my soul doats on,
" and yet dreading to retain you, lest my
" girl should return, I take this method
" of bidding you farewell!—As early in
" the morning as you choose to com-
" mence your journey, you will have a
" pair of my best horses at your service;
" and Robert, the poor fellow who has

" always been so attached to you, ready " to attend you. Enclosed is a draft " on my banker for five hundred pounds, " besides twenty pounds in small notes " to pay your travelling expences. You " will receive a similar draft every six " months.

" ' Whenever Eleanor is married, I " request you will return to me, never " more to leave me, whilst I remain a " member of this habitable globe. God " bless you, my dear Charles! May " health and happiness attend you, is " the sincere wish of

" ' Your affectionate uncle,

" ' C. DUNSTANVILLE.' "

" You see, my dearest Eleanor! how " we are situated, and that the old " gentleman cannot receive me, until " you are married. I think, were we " even united without asking his con- " sent, he would not be seriously dis- " pleased; particularly, as we have

" such reason to hope Talbot would,
" at least, allow your mother hand-
" somely.—What are we to do?—
" Shall I return for you to Ireland; and
" shall we then proceed to Scotland?—
" Yet, I will not hurry you into a mea-
" sure offensive to the delicacy of your
" nature!—No, my love! we will throw
" ourselves upon your mother's mercy
" when we separate her from Sybella.
" Could you not all return to England,
" where our plague would remain, as
" she hates travelling; whilst you might
" proceed with your mother to view
" your Scottish estates; and then I
" think it would not be difficult to gain
" her consent.

" I wait your answer. As soon as Ro-
" bert receives it he will hasten to join
" me here.

" Your devoted
" CHARLES DUNSTANVILLE."

" P. S. You may remember, the sum
" we allowed for our maintenance you

" thought very ample—I think to that " we may add the sum my uncle so " generously allows me."

Eleanor never experienced a happier moment than on reading Dunstanville's letter. She felt how much superior his love was to her's; and that, though appearances were so much against her, yet he never doubted her truth.

She immediately communicated the subject of her letter to Louisa, who agreed with her in thinking that Dunstanville had better return towards the end of October with Talbot, who would then be of age; and could, with Eleanor, divide a property that they supposed neither could possess on the terms of the will.

Miss Berry now calling for Eleanor, she took an affectionate leave of her friend; and dismissing Robert with a handsome present, said she would give him an answer when next she came to town; desiring him, as usual, to be

near her carriage, and not to be surprised, if she handed him money as if in payment, for that probably the paper about it would convey some directions.

Poor Eleanor was dreadfully annoyed at being obliged to act in this underhand manner. She reconciled it to herself, by considering it was not to deceive her mother, but, to escape Sybella's snares; feeling authorised to act as she did, from a conversation she had with her mother the day she left Holly Mount; who, overcome with the debate she had that morning with Sybella, was unusually depressed at her daughter's coldness of manner; and, bursting into tears,—"My dear Eleanor," said she, "from many circumstances, I fear, you think me selfish and unfeeling,—not so sensible as I should be to the blessing of having such a child.—Yet, my love, there is nothing I have so sincerely at heart as your happiness.—I give you my consent to ensure it in your own way; and do not, from the dread of im-

poverishing me, make any sacrifice. One thing only, I conjure you, do not embroil me with my niece ;—if you do, I cannot answer for myself, or what steps she may force me to take: therefore, beloved child ! I cannot demand your confidence. Keep all your plans equally secret from me as from her. Remember, the permission I formerly gave I never retracted."

Eleanor was all gratitude ; they embraced, and each felt it was the moment of reconciliation ; though there was no offence urged, or defence made.

This conversation had the happiest effect on Eleanor ; her mother's treachery had weighed heavily on her spirits, and did not at all reconcile to her correct mind the adoption of clandestine proceedings. In the present moment, particularly, she felt the full advantage of her mother's acquiescence, and that she had now only to lament her being so governed by Sybella.

CHAPTER XII.

Here Folly still his votaries enthrals.

BYRON.

SPRING was now rapidly advancing, clothing the world in new beauty, when Mary claimed Stockdale's promise of taking her to Bath, to see her parents before they went to the Continent. He was unwilling at this verdant season to leave Drummore; but his beautiful Mary would brook no refusal.

Since their marriage they had lived secluded from all; their solitude only interrupted by a short visit from his mother, Mrs. Stockdale; and one still shorter from Louisa and Mrs. Jackson, on their way home. Mary felt the greatest pleasure in Louisa's society; and made her promise, that on her re-

turn from Bath she would spend some time with her.

Lady Elizabeth, impatient to see her daughter, urged them in every letter to hasten their departure; drawing pictures of their amusements there, that filled Mary with delightful anticipations, and Stockdale with melancholy forebodings; although so enamoured, he could discover in Mary's character the seeds of vanity and a thirst for admiration. These foibles, whilst living in deep retirement, such as had been customary to the ladies of his family, never, he supposed, could militate against his peace.

She had never been presented at court, seldom made her appearance in large companies; and it was his intention she never should; for he dreaded, if she once received the adulation of the world, that he might from that period bid adieu to domestic happiness; her sentiments and her taste would undergo a complete change; entirely engrossed by self, the

idea of her own perfections would mount to such a height, that the plain simple language of truth would appear to her inflated mind cold and unfeeling, and the conversation that did not turn on the trifles that occupied her, vapid and uninteresting.

Still, he could not, although of a firm decided temper, refuse his assent to her wishes. Early in February they joined the Listowels in Bath. For a time Stockdale almost forgot his anxiety: he felt such satisfaction in the innocent gaiety of her spirits, exhilarated to a high degree by the pleasure she experienced in being with her parents, and the variety of the scene, charmingly contrasted with the dull monotony of Drummore.

Franklin says, that he has scarcely ever heard "the introductory phrase, 'I may say without vanity,' but some striking and characteristic instance of vanity has immediately followed; the generality of

men hate vanity in others, however strongly they may be tinctured with it themselves: Stockdale was an instance of this; he could not but participate in Lady Elizabeth's vanity, on the sensation Mary's appearance caused in Bath; whilst, with the timidity of first youth, she sought, in his approving glance, courage and support. Her company was universally sought, and no party was thought worth attending that was not graced by her presence. But the timid, confiding manner so flattering to Stockdale, soon gave place to one more assured, and becoming sensible of the admiration she excited, she was now entirely engrosed by her new friends: she felt indebted to their discernment for discovering her transcendent merit, and raising her so highly in her own estimation, whilst the estimation of her friends seemed cold in comparison.

This was a source of infinite vexation to Stockdale, who now seldom saw her,

and when they did meet, he could not consider her as a rational companion; she had no conversation interesting to him. In the family circle, it ran on gauze and trimmings; Lady Elizabeth debated with her whether their gowns should be trimmed with lace or tulle, or, perhaps bobbin net would be prettier, more simple. "The French," she said, "value it highly, and give us their lace in exchange. Did you see Miss L. since her return from Paris? They gave her the sweetest veil in exchange, such a rich pattern; but they have such taste, if they but pin up a bow for you they give it an air of consequence; and then, it is easy in their shops to find what is becoming, they know so well what to recommend; and pay you such charming compliments, 'Madame looks like an angel!'"

"How delightful!" replied Mary." "Of course, at those charming compliments the purchaser smiles, and her

countenance having a pleased look, will be the easier set off. If our friend, Miss Trope, had been so complimented when choosing her bonnet this morning, perhaps they would not have had to seek through so many boxes for one to please her fancy; as she proceeded, she thought they presented bonnets more hideous, and more *outré;* at length, her passion was rising; whilst I secretly smiled, pitying the poor girl who could present her nothing that would look tolerable with that frowning, despairing countenance."

"Ridiculous! I wonder young people are not more cautious; frowning ruins the countenance, giving it the wrinkles of age: sighs and tears are more graceful; or, if they want to express indignation or contempt, they can draw up the head haughtily, flash the eye, or pout the lip: never, my dear child, frown, even supposing Mr. Stockdale contradicts you. —By the way, will you wear your blue

dress to-night? It is the sweetest thing imaginable, it sets off the transparency of your skin. What pleasure it gives me to see you so admired! Every one said we were so like, and that I appeared only as your elder sister.—Was I not, Mr. Listowel, just such a lovely blossom when we first met?"

Listowel gave her the desired assent, but not until the question had been several times repeated. He was completely absorbed in a train of reflection; congratulating himself on Mary's being so well married, conscious that his influence was insufficient to lead her from the flowery path of pleasure. He judged a mind like hers, habitually relaxed by indulgence,, could now only be restrained by one, who, although fervently attached, had power to prohibit with firmness what he condemned. He saw, however, if she were much longer in her mother's society, that her taste for pleasure would absorb every other;

and that it would be the work of time before she could be brought again to relish a quiet country life, and home amusements.

Listowel soon had another motive for shortening his stay at Bath.—Robert Belmont came, and although his visits were forbidden, still, they met everywhere, and Lady Elizabeth received his attentions as usual. In vain Listowel remonstrated; as it was, his jealousy amused her, it made a new era in her wedded life; and afforded a charming subject of conversation with a hundred select friends. Listowel found if he remained much longer he should become a subject of wonder and curiosity to all the gay married women, and thoughtless husbands in Bath.

He therefore prevailed on Lord Ardsallagh to hasten their departure, and about the beginning of April took leave of the weeping Mary, who, in vain, exerted all her influence with Stock-

dale to join their party. It was then Stockdale's wish to return to Ireland, but Mary would not hear of it until he had taken her to London. He was obliged to acquiesce, and indulged her by remaining there the two following months. Every day he was more out of patience at the wilfulness of her disposition, which forced him to lead a life so totally dissimilar to his taste, frequently sacrificing his comfort to her slightest whim. He began to fear her disposition was decidedly selfish; and that she must have very little affection for him, or she would in some degree study his taste, cultivate his friends, and mix in the society that she knew would give him pleasure. She loved large parties and crowded rooms, where she was received and followed as the most brilliant beauty that had for years appeared. Unfortunately for Mary, Robert Belmont followed them to London; he took a spiteful pleasure in

aggravating all her faults to Stockdale; whilst underhand he encouraged her more freely to indulge in them. This double part was not suspected by either. Stockdale supposed he had a strong regard for her, from long acquaintance and obligations to her family, and that the quarrels they formerly had, proceeded from his supposing himself privileged to find fault, and his too bluntly telling the truth, not qualifying his expressions of disapprobation. Mary forgave him from the generosity of her disposition; concluding, as she was away from all her family, that he felt more interested for her, and had forgiven her not marrying his brother. He attended her everywhere, paying her most assiduous court, as through her influence only could he gain admittance into the fashionable circles. He constantly received letters from Sybella, expressing impatience for his return, to aid her in carrying on her

plans. She was alarmed at not knowing where Dunstanville was, who corresponded as usual with Eleanor, and as usual his letters contained no information. This struck Sybella as very extraordinary; she almost suspected they had outwitted her, and that they had some other mode of corresponding. Mary, Eleanor's maid, underwent a strict examination, and she readily believed the poor terrified girl was not intrusted; who said, crying—"That she knew nothing of Miss Eleanor's secrets, for that she kept her keys more careful than ever, and that as to her writing, she never now found even a bit of a letter after her."

Belmont answered his lovely Sybella's letters regularly, in the most impassioned style, paying her the most hyperbolical compliments. She became intoxicated by his praise, acknowledging he was the first she ever met who understood her merits, or that was gifted with a genius similar to her own.

CHAPTER XIII.

"On every side his watchful thoughts he cast."

About the end of May, Stockdale, sick of a London life, returned with Mary to Drummore, firmly resisting the whole artillery of sighs, tears, hysterics, &c. The first circumstance that appeased her anger, and mitigated her sorrow, was his going to Killarney for Louisa, an indulgence he was very willing to give her; hoping the steady sense, and amiable disposition of that charming young person, would work a happy change in her friend, who, ever desirous of her good opinion, would insensibly adopt her former habits of mildness and attention to the wishes of others.

Mary, with the candour natural to her character, told Louisa every thing that had occurred in Bath and London. The very recapitulating her errors, led her to reflect, and to lament that she had tried Stockdale's patience so frequently.

On these occasions Louisa acted the part of a steady friend, not attempting to palliate her faults, or in any measure to lessen the bitterness of repentance; trying rather to awaken her to a consciousness of a brighter realm, and of what was expected from her, both in a Christian and a moral point of view. Louisa was so gentle, so mild in her remonstrances, that Mary, without dreading her censure, looked up to her judgment, and listened to truths which, since her parting with Mr. Villars, her mind had never dwelt on.

Highly as Mary was gratified by Louisa's company, still at times she could not banish the demon *ennui*, and

to make some variety in their family circle, requested Stockdale would invite the Dunstanvilles and the Belmonts. To this, she thought reasonable request, he gave a decided negative; thinking himself warranted in doing so from experience, judging that her wants and wishes when indulged, resembled the many-headed monster, from whom, if one head is lopped off, many spring up in its place. Besides, he had for such a length of time given up his own pleasure and pursuits, and his many snug ways, to which, before his wedded life he adhered with old bachelor pertinacity, living at Drummore for years with his mother, Mrs. Stockdale, in full enjoyment of comforts. He was now again just beginning to settle in his old habits, and to feel comfortable, when, to his utter dismay, Mary made this proposal;—nay even declared she had heedlessly, when writing to Eleanor, given them an invitation. He told

her to be under no concern, for if her answer made it necessary, he himself would put them off.

Added to his dislike of his hours being broke in on, he knew, if they came, his wife would, for their entertainment, wish still further to enlarge their circle, and that this would lead to the inviting some dashing officers then quartered at D——. He feared if she once got a taste for such society, home would never hereafter be at his command, or prove to him a secure retreat from impertinence. Besides, such an enlargement of the social circle was, in his family, unprecedented, in which it had been handed down as a maxim from father to son, that women should be ruled. He was fully sensible of the improvement in Mary's temper; but, he was not sensible of its cause; heedlessly supposing all would now continue well, if he could remain steady in following the rule of his fathers.

Robert Belmont, who had been invited by Stockdale, brought Eleanor's answer: saying, the whole party would, the following week, be very happy to accept her invitation. Mary cried with vexation when she found her husband still persevered in his intention of putting them off; and, notwithstanding Louisa's efforts to reconcile her mind to the disappointment, she was in the pouts for two days. Robert Belmont was present at part of the altercation, secretly smiling, and rejoiced when he discovered who the bugbears were. He soon contrived that Mary should make the same discovery, and that she should fancy she was indebted for it to her own sagacity. The result was, that she was expiring to become acquainted with the officers, and was daily hoping that chance would favour her. Before this discovery, she had met them every Sunday at church, and was scarcely sensible of their presence; but now she

viewed them with more attention, and on the last Sunday discovered that two of them were handsome young men, remarkably gentlemanly, and that the third was a most interesting youth, apparently falling into a decline from a wound received in the service of his country. He was about her brother's age, and had an appearance of helplessness and delicacy that at once excited her pity, and an ardent wish to relieve his sufferings. Louisa partook of her feelings, and with her lamented that so young a man should be so severe a sufferer; prudently remarking, that his brother officers paid him unremitting attention, and that the surgeon of the regiment was known to possess great medical skill.

Belmont, who was present at this conversation, took care to make the most of it to Stockdale; hinting, that as Louisa was so well instructed by the good Mrs. Kelly in the art of healing,

he supposed she would make up *never-failing nostrums* for the young gentleman. Stockdale was irritated, and his irritation was not lessened by a conversation he chanced to overhear between Louisa and a poor old man, who, emaciated from long illness, appeared sinking into the grave from want and wretchedness.

"You appear so weak, my poor man," said Louisa, in a compassionate tone, "that I am certain a little mutton broth would be of service to you. My mother, who is very skilful, I think would recommend it to you, and to eat the mutton that it is made with."

"It is *asy*, miss, for the *fine folk* to tell us poor creatures what we should take.—Mutton broth, indeed! Do you see, I have not had a taste of meat since last Christmas, when his honour, God bless him! *kilt* the *beves* for the poor."

Louisa gave him a six-shilling piece, recommending him to go to the apothecary.

The poor man lifted up his hands in astonishment, and with the strongest expressions of gratitude, prayed she might have every happiness.

"Already, my dear young miss," he said, "I feel revived,—you have done my heart good! We will all at home have a merry day of it; for, what with my sickness, and the death of the black cow, we had not one halfpenny to rub upon another!"

This conversation would have raised Louisa in Stockdale's estimation, were it not for the hint Belmont had given him; her having mentioned Mrs. Kelly's name completely alarmed him, and he considered his having been put so soon on his guard a most fortunate circumstance.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Her husband lov'd; but oh! was doom'd to prove
At once the extremes of jealousy and love;
He kept her close excluded from mankind."

On Stockdale's return to the house, he found Mrs. Berkley from D——, in the library with Mary, who exclaimed on his entrance—"I am so glad you are come!—Mrs. Berkley has requested permission to bring a party of friends in our boat, to dine in the island off Frederick's point; and she has been so good as to invite us to be of the party. I have consented, on condition the whole party spend the evening here; and we may conclude with a ball."

"You are too good!" returned Mrs. Berkley; "this will make my young

people very happy. We are, I believe, fourteen in number, reckoning our officers, very gentlemanly young men—indeed our ladies are all in love with them—Major Horsely gains their hearts by singing, and playing on the flute; whilst Captain Mordaunt charms all by his powers of conversation. Poor Lieutenant Lemon, though not so highly talented as his companions, is not the less a favourite, from the gentle pity he excites; and pity you know is a-kin to love."

Mary laughed, highly amused in watching how Stockdale took this conversation. He was on thorns; condemning Mrs. Berkley as the most talkative and presuming old lady he ever met; and was almost inclined to retract the ungracious assent he had given.

Mrs. Berkley's carriage now coming round, he handed her out; and to her smiling nod, and, 'Remember Friday,' he returned only a cold salute.

He hastened towards Belmont, whom he saw returning from the stables, to communicate his distress, and ask his advice how he had best extricate himself from this dilemma. Belmont smiled, secretly rejoicing that his plan had so well succeeded; he having visited Mrs. Berkley the day before, and led her to form the party.

Belmont looked very solemn while Stockdale related to him the circumstances; and that Mrs. Stockdale had invited a large company without saying a word to him on the subject.

Belmont shook his head; saying—"You often wonder at my endeavouring to check her flippant spirit; but experience now tells you I was acting the part of a true friend."

"Your intention, I am certain, was excellent; but your manner was too blunt—more calculated to raise her angry passions than to convince her reason."

"Well," said Belmont, smiling, "we shall see how much better your *steady gentleness* will succeed in bending this high spirit. You have already commenced a contest—one of you must submit; and I augur," said Belmont, with a sarcastic smile, "that, as my mother would say, 'the grey mare is the better horse.'"

"Certainly, contradicting her in the smallest point is to me dreadful!—Trifles are of such vast importance to her. It is not this party, but its bearings I dread. If Mrs. Stockdale once has the habit of mixing with the neighbours, I shall find it as difficult a task to keep her within bounds here as in London."

"True; and a Corydon may prove as dangerous to your peace as a Bond Street lounger."

"Vanity,—an inordinate passion for admiration, is the rock of most gay young women!—yet, her love for me, her sound

principles and purity of heart make me feel perfect reliance. She would view even lightness of conduct with horror and contempt.—She has a noble disposition, and is incapable of wilful error. What I fear for my Mary is, her taste for home, for domestic pleasures being vitiated. Poor thing, she has had but little experience that way! You know Lady Elizabeth was never happy but in crowds; and to gain general admiration has ever been her aim—no one knows her better than you do."

"Her daughter resembles her;—but the question is, do you resemble Mr. Listowel?—Will you give up the wish nearest your heart to gratify your wife's whim?—For instance, it was his duty, his pleasure to live at Listowel Park—Lady Elizabeth would not hear of it—and after having her a few mornings in hysterics, he gave up the point, and has never been there but once since his marriage!—Yet, I should suppose your

cara sposa has a higher spirit than her mother—she has more talent, and has been as little subject to controul."

"Very true; but Mrs. Stockdale has a fine understanding, with a strong sense of duty. She is, when away from frivolous companions, every thing the most fastidious could desire.—It is now my wish to make her break this engagement without raising her spirit."

"What is your plan?"

"I have not digested it yet; but have two days for forming some excuse."

The next day's post, to Stockdale's great relief, brought him a letter from his mother, requesting they would meet her on Friday, at Lady Wimpole's, as she was on her way to England, and had not time to go so far as Drummore.

With delight he went into the breakfast-room, the open letter in his hand.

Mary at first rejoiced at the idea of seeing Mrs. Stockdale, who had been always a favourite of hers; but, after a

moment's thought, pleaded her engagement, and requested he would make her apology, and let his mother know how much she regretted not being able to meet her, as she was to have company at home."

"That," returned Stockdale, "would be to her no apology.—Knowing this neighbourhood so well, herself seldom seen in their circles, she will never suppose the party originally formed by you;—we will lend them our boat, which you know is all they asked."

Mary thought him very unreasonable; but at length, with a tolerable grace, she consented to make her apology to the company, and meet Mrs. Stockdale.

CHAPTER XV.

"'Tis not enough your counsel still be true;
Blunt truths more mischief than nice falsehoods do.
Men must be taught as if you taught them not,
And things unknown propos'd as things forgot.
Without good breeding, truth is disapprov'd,
That only makes superior sense belov'd."

In Mrs. Stockdale's society, Mary forgot her disappointment, and did not return home until a late hour. They found Louisa alone in the drawing-room, playing on the piano-forte. To their inquiries of how she spent her time, she blushed and hesitated, and at length made them understand that she walked to the village, and had been in the garden.

"Pray who did you see?—Did any of the gay boating party call?"

Louisa did not answer this question of Mary's, which Stockdale saw evidently annoyed her. At length she contrived to change the conversation, by inquiring for Mrs. Stockdale and the ladies they went to visit. Shortly after, Belmont made his appearance—he had been of the party to the island, and returned with them to D——, where they had a ball in the market-house. He said he left them dancing, and was deputed by Mrs. Berkley to try and prevail on them, even at that late hour, to join their party. Stockdale frowned, making him a sign of silence on that subject. Belmont gaily smiled, and continued—"Of course, I knew you would consider it as a dreadful bore; but thought my commission an excellent pretence for returning."

"Is the ball-room tolerable?" inquired Mary.

"Famous! for such a small village."

"I wish we were there—what do you

say?—Dear Mr. Stockdale, do come! I long to know if they had a pleasant day—do, pray come!—Louisa, we will not be a moment dressing—*allons!*—"You do not answer me," said Mary, turning to Stockdale; "there was a time when my slightest word would be attended to!"

"I am silent only from sorrow at being obliged to refuse any request of yours. Consider, my love! it is now eleven o'clock."

"We will arrive there as they are sitting down to supper; and one dance after supper, you have often told me, when my partner," she said, playfully tapping him on the shoulder, "was worth ten before; therefore come, and do not so soon let me see the contrast betwixt the husband and the lover! Come, Louisa, we must put on gay apparel; but perhaps you think Nature has been so bountiful that you do not require the foreign aid of ornament.

Let me look at you; my friend, were it not for tyrant custom you might do as you pleased—always lovely!"

"Tyrant custom, my love!" returned Stockdale, "is equally despotic in other particulars.—I am happy to find you bow to his authority—as I suppose I shall not have to exert mine."

A gloom instantly pervaded Mary's countenance.—"I do not understand you, sir.—I never heard it was customary for a young woman to refuse going to a ball, or for her husband to prevent her:—perhaps it may have been customary for the ladies of this family, which boasts its antediluvian origin.—Never hope to find me a piece of still life, according to the old custom, making quilts and carpets! No, no! I will only be swayed by the customs of eighteen hundred and —— which ordain us women of fashion to live in the very best and gayest society; and always to appear charmingly dressed, leaning

on our husbands' arms :—you and I, for instance—Louisa and Robert in the back ground—what pleasing surprise we should cause!"

Stockdale glancing from her to Louisa, with an approving smile, said—"Should we not, Belmont, present the handsomest women there? Pray, consider, my dearest Mary, that it would not be proper for a young woman of your rank to attend a village ball—it would be holding yourself too cheap :—you must appear amongst them as a constellation, and that but rarely, or your effect would lessen."

"I flatter myself you are the only man would say so.—Come, Louisa, we lose time."

Louisa did not move.

"Miss Kelly," said Stockdale, "has, I am sure, too high a sense of propriety to think you serious in wishing to go."

"Perhaps so," said Mary, looking

anxiously at Louisa. "We differ in many points:—declare, my dear Louisa, are you such a prude as to see any impropriety in going to a ball? I hope you are not turned methodist!"

"No, my dear friend! but like you I must bend to circumstances; and there is one that would render my going highly improper."

"What can that be, that has power to debar you from an innocent and natural amusement befitting your age? Surely Mr. Kelly is not such a cynic?"

"Oh, no! but I am requested by one, whose friendship I value, not to frequent public places—not to mix in large companies—and to make as few acquaintances as possible."

"Your friend is the most unreasonable person I ever heard of.—But I suppose you will not refuse to accompany me?"

"Surely, after what I have told you, you would not wish me to go?"

"You are a strange girl!" said Mary; "I should love you better if you did not consider propriety so much."

Louisa smiled.—"It is necessary I should, as I am not so blessed as you, who have always kind friends ready to direct your conduct; but I must act from my own judgment;—the responsibility is all my own.—Sometimes, when at a loss, I put the question, 'What would my dear father say were he present, in his clear view, unclouded by prejudice or passion, what would he define right, and what wrong.' This method has proved an advantage to me a hundred times. Shall I put the question for you, Mrs. Stockdale?" said Louisa, smiling, and in an under tone.

Mary silenced her by a grave look, saying—"I see you will remain at home; but I will be satisfied if you will have the honesty to confess you would like to go?"

"We are friends again," said Louisa,

"I should like to go extremely; I am fond of dancing, it raises my spirits, and makes me lose a depressed feeling that I sometimes have."

"Well, I must even go without you," said Mary, leaving the room.

"Where, my dear, are you going?" inquired Stockdale, anxiously.

"To dress for the ball."

"You cannot go; it is too late."

"It matters not, I am *determined!* Go I will! If you come with me, I will be much obliged to you," said Mary, crossing the hall with a firm determined step. Stockdale followed her, saying, "If you will but listen to me, I will explain my objections."

Belmont laughed.—"Think how ridiculous his fancy of immuring a lovely young person! Were he to know, Louisa, you were with the officers to-day, he would be miserable.

"And I," returned Louisa, "am miserable at having a concealment.—I

never thought Mr. Stockdale's eyes so penetrating as when he asked me how I spent the morning. Why did you, when you knew his objections to my making acquaintances, bring them to me?"

"Pardon me, I could not avoid it. They admired you, and said unless I presented them, they should suppose I considered you as my exclusive property."

Louisa looked at him with haughty contempt, saying, since she was liable to such intrusion, the gates should, for the future, be her boundary.

"What then will become of the old man you were visiting? Pray commission me, I will inquire into his wants."

"You!—Alas! I fear he could raise no interest in your bosom!"

"You grow severe. Is this your boasted Christian charity? Why should you judge me? Or, why despair of making me every thing you could wish;

I am so willing to be taught by you:—indeed, if you do not attempt the task, you will have to reproach yourself; and at present I have so much time to devote to you. Would it were in my power to make you mine for life! Do not start, and look so averse; I never loved one of your sex as I love you.—If you doubt me, I will engage myself to you in any manner you consider as most binding,—in any bond,—under any forfeiture,—if you will but promise to be mine!" He tried to take her hand; she would not permit him, and in a cold, disdainful manner, requested he would not, for a moment, suppose it was her wish to enter into any engagement with him: that she considered the situation of engaged persons unfortunate, and one"——

"If such, my adored Louisa! is your objection, can we not have an immediate private marriage?"

"Never! I am not, sir, so destitute

as to have the power of disposing of myself—"

"You wish me to apply to old Kelly —but, once for all, I tell you, I will have nothing to say to that old hunks —nor shall he ever unite us! No, no! I will not be schooled or dictated to by him: but I have a clerical friend, whom on such an occasion, I shall be proud to introduce to you. You are silent; why those cold disdainful looks? Even, my lovely friend! in policy you should meet my wishes. As my wife you will have all you now want—a name,—connexions; you start! Your wonder will increase, when I tell you, I have long known there was a mystery attending your birth!"

"Pray," said Louisa, with earnestness, "let me hear no more from you on a subject that, even from my best friend, causes me the bitterest feelings."

"Best friend!—And what am I? Do not I propose myself to be your hus-

band,—your guardian,—your protector! Where have you such another friend?"

Louisa looked at him almost with contempt. "What would become of me if I had no better friend? In what manner would you show your friendship? Is it by increasing the mystery of my situation, causing me to have unnecessary concealments? Why did you prevent me from acknowledging to Mr. Stockdale your having introduced the officers to me, when you know how the least want of candour may injure me? What will the Stockdales think of me? Should I meet those gentlemen, my knowing them will be discovered; and how am I to account to him for having kept my acquaintance with them a secret?"

"Oh! never fear, Stockdale will take care you shall never meet them in his presence: besides, I will tell them not to speak to you in their company."

"Oh! no, do not so: I have always

acted without disguise, and told simply and fully the truth: this evening you have made me deviate from this rule, and act blindly on your judgment in direct contradiction to my own;—the very error my dear father feared I should fall into."

"You cannot accuse yourself, my sweet confiding fair! men have stronger minds, therefore, you may rely blindly on my judgment."

I will not dispute the perfect ability of our natures; but I deeply lament the dilemma you have led me into."

Stockdale now returned, looking very grave; he told Louisa her friend had gone to bed, and as it was late, requested she would not go to her room.

Louisa took the hint, and wishing the gentlemen a good night, retired to her own apartment.

On her leaving the room, Stockdale observed to Belmont, that he did not approve of confidants:—"If," said he,

" Miss Kelly went to Mrs. Stockdale, she would repeat to her our conversation; they would put their heads together; and, supposing me a very tyrant, labour to outwit me. I think a woman should have no confidant but her husband; a female one is often as injurious to our peace as a male."

" You look ruffled."

" I have been obliged, for the first time, to exert my authority, and to say —You shall not go to the ball.—Authoritative language was almost unintelligible to her. She looked at me with amazement, and according as that lessened, her indignation rose: at length it mounted so high, that she cried with passion, and stamped; saying, for the first time in her life she was ordered;—that she would teach me she was no baby. I reminded her that I exerted no authority which the engagement we had entered into did not sanction. Then, she exclaimed:—How mean, how un-

generous, I was, in taking advantage of a human ordinance! That nature bound her as religiously to obey her parents, but that they never exerted their authority; on the contrary, with a generous nobleness of spirit, she presumed, unintelligible to me, they waved their power and indulged her every wish. In short, she talked much nonsense, and concluded with saying:—'Once, for all, sir, I will not bear contradiction, I will go to the ball!' I could not but smile at her vehemence, and said, it was a pity Time itself would not obey her, she gave the word of command with such grace; that it was then twelve o'clock, the horses could not be ready for at least an hour, and that most likely by the time she would arrive at D——, the company would have dispersed. She looked at her watch, and could not deny the truth of this observation; she therefore became calmer, and said she would go to bed. This is our first con-

jugal row.—Alas! I fear it promises many such!"

"I fear so too;—her's is an unmanageable spirit; but—I was thinking this morning, how quick-sighted you were in foreseeing probable occurrences, and that Louisa's love of practising physic would bring you into mischief. I met her to-day in the village, visiting the old man. Horsely and his officers were with me; they, of course, seeing me speak to such a fine girl, insisted on being made known to her; begging permission to attend her into the grounds, and to be shown the conservatory, gardens, &c. She complied, they were highly gratified, declaring they had never spent so pleasant a morning."

"Is it possible! I had, I confess, a better opinion of her; or I should not have allowed Mary to invite her.—Now depend on it, these officers will form the subject of their conversation. I have no notion of my privacy being in-

vaded by strangers. What would my mother say? Would that my wife had some of her dignity! and yet she was on terms with all the neighbourhood: entertained them three or four times a year, and occasionally went to their houses.

The clock striking one, reminded the friends it was time to separate.

CHAPTER XVI.

Together they explor'd the page
Of glowing bard or gifted sage;
Oft plac'd the evening fire beside,
The minstrel art alternate try'd.

BYRON.

A MONTH now glided by, unmarked by any incident. Mary had by degrees recovered her good humour.

Belmont had been absent; he received a summons from Sybella, who still, on some pretence, detained him in Dublin.

Louisa was again coming into favour with Stockdale; he had nearly forgotten the officers, and studied by diversifying home amusements to make the ladies likewise forget them.—He found the task delightful,—they were both so accomplished,—had such noble, inno-

cent minds. Mary's animation was captivating,—particularly when tempered by the superior solidity of her friend; whom, notwithstanding Belmont's insinuations, he could not believe artful.

The only trouble Stockdale had with Louisa, was to prevent her going to the village; she had always been in the habit of visiting the poor, and could not, without great reluctance give them up. One morning they were talking on the subject, when alone. She said, blushing deeply, that she must acknowledge there was one objection to her going to the village, "lest" said she, "I should meet the officers."—She hesitated—looking down, oppressed by the scrutinising severity of his glance. With some effort she proceeded.—"Mr. Belmont told me you objected to our being acquainted with them; and recommended I should keep it a secret. I have never seen them since; you now know me better, and may judge that I am not

in haste to form new acquaintances. I may therefore relieve my mind by telling you this little circumstance. It has prevented my going to church; lest they should surprise you by claiming acquaintance with me."

Stockdale thought he saw the drift of her confession; which he attributed to the height of artifice: he replied, therefore, with some indignation—"I am surprised at what you tell me, and still more, at such a prudent young lady inviting them into the grounds, showing them the conservatory, gardens, and hot-houses."

"You astonish me exceedingly," said Louisa, looking at him, to see if he were serious: "they asked leave to accompany me to the house,—on which, Mr. Belmont proposed we should walk through the grounds. I declined, and returned the shortest way; which, you know, leads to the conservatory, they entered with me.—I was then very much

at a loss;—I feared lest Mr. Belmont should invite them to follow me were I to enter the house,—and you know he is so arbitrary,—he was, indeed, very troublesome; but that to me was nothing new; although doubly distressing in the presence of strangers. At length, Major Horsley, seeing how I was distressed, had the kindness to leave me, and take his companions with him; although pressed to remain by Mr. Belmont.—I was very grateful to him, and saw them afterwards go towards the gardens."

"Is it possible! Are you indeed telling me the truth?"

"The truth!" repeated Louisa, her cheeks glowing, and her beautiful eyes turned towards him with indignant surprise.

"Pardon me," he replied, "if I have offended you."

"I am not accustomed to be doubted, and wonder at your condescension in

questioning one you could think capable of deceiving you."

Stockdale again begged her pardon; but there was a coldness in his manner, that evidently showed his words were dictated by politeness more than by a conviction of her strict adherence to truth. He was not a nice discriminator of character; and supposing Belmont could have no motive for deceiving, he implicitly relied on him; condemning poor Louisa, as bearing only the semblance of virtues; and again regretted having sought her society for his innocent Mary.

He walked to the garden, not with any intention of questioning the gardener, but, as his mind was engrossed by the subject, he naturally, on meeting him, inquired how Major Horsely liked the garden.

"He could not *mislike* it, your honour."

"Did Miss Kelly do the honours well?"

and order fruit and flowers for the gentlemen ?"

" Miss Kelly, sweet young lady, was not with them. No, no, she could have told the names of all my lady's flowers, but Mr. Belmont was there, who knows nothing at all about the matter. It was *myself* showed every thing: troth, I wished for Miss Kelly to say the names for me,—my tongue has not turned to them yet;—but the poor thing was glad to make her escape from them."

" Why so ? Where did she leave them ?"

" In the conservatory. Mr. Belmont was teasing her, making believe he was her lover;—indeed, he was quite *rumbunctious*. I was settling the flowers there, and if the fine gentry were not by, I would have told him a bit of my mind."

Stockdale returned towards the house, astonished and shocked at Belmont's duplicity. What could be his motive for misrepresenting one so lovely and unof-

fending; he now bitterly lamented his harsh conduct towards her: wondering her gentleness of manner and depression of spirits did not excite his pity. It occurred to him suddenly, that in Belmont's absence she was a different being, and never in low spirits except when he was present. It next occurred to him, that Belmont very readily agreed with him in opinion that she was not a fit companion for his wife; and that his eyes sparkled with triumph when he proposed himself as her escort, should it be found expedient to return her to her friends. Whilst these ideas were torturing his mind, Belmont made his appearance.

He had left Dublin that morning, and now approached Stockdale with a smiling countenance, apologizing for his long absence, business having detained him. —"You will smile," he said, "when I explain to you, and say, it was business

of the heart—tender sentiments, &c. &c. —Would you believe it?—the little fairy queen, my Sybella, has taken a prodigious fancy to my delectable person.—But soft, restrain your surprise, this whim of hers is to be kept, for *many* reasons, a dead secret.—I believe she will even insist on a private marriage —every thing to give it the appearance of a *love-match*:—is it not a good idea? —But not to make her more ridiculous than she already is, I must account for this concealment, which we must persevere in, until an old lover, who jilted her some hundred years ago, is punished. She fears her father, whose nephew he is, would forgive the affront, and take him into greater favour than ever, if he knew she had got a husband. Her father would then think her wrongs redressed, would forthwith take the gay deceiver to his bosom, and again declare him his heir: therefore, you may perceive, my dear sir, that my

Sybella's principal charm depends on keeping this business secret."

"Is it possible? Will you marry with those ideas?"

"It is the fate of my family.—What am I to do?—a younger brother.—My father, from his church preferment, having a large income, has brought us all up extravagantly. I have no profession—at least inclination does not lead me to choose one:—and I have not application necessary to profit by the excellent education I have received. My mother, with the best intentions in the world, early taught us to love pleasure, leading us to form our associates among the rich nobility.—Self-gratification has therefore been our first object; and as our allowance at present is liberal, we do not dwell on the change that may take place. On my father's death, Walter only will have an independence; to him it will prove one—to me it would be nothing—at least, I

shall not consider myself entitled to marry, unless I have two thousand a year:—but, with my adorable mistress, I will have nine thousand per annum!"

"Well, I heartily congratulate you, since such is your idea of happiness, on your having met so amiable a partner!"

"Oh! pray desist; if you regard me do not dwell on her *amiable* qualities;—her loving me should, in my eyes, hide a multitude of faults:—besides, I consider an amiable woman as a very insipid animal.—I like spirit, life, even although accompanied by whim and self-conceit! It may afford a man an apology for leaving her sometimes; and, you know," he said, smiling, "I shall have no cause to fear officers in my absence!"

Stockdale looked grave.—"*A-propos* to officers," he said; "I have had a conversation with Louisa on the subject. (Belmont looked alarmed) She denies having walked in the grounds, or in the garden, with them."

"No! did I say she did?—Well—I was impressed with the idea of their having gained admittance through her means;—and she certainly was,—now, I fully recollect, doing the honours in the green-house."

"No, in the conservatory?"

"Perhaps so," returned Belmont; "it was some place where there were flowers—she seemed a second Perditta, presenting each of her company with appropriate flowers.—I almost, for her sake, wished myself a Florizel.—I do not know a finer girl, or one that, were I rich, would sooner tempt me to make a foolish match.—However, she did serious mischief that day;—Horsely fell in love with her, and has tormented me with letters to procure him an opportunity of declaring his passion, and of making acquaintance with her."

"I am shocked to hear this; although, perhaps, I am very wrong.—She is so much superior to the situation she holds

in society, that I sometimes almost think with you, she is a Perditta, and must have sprung from noble origin. Horsely, I hear, is a respectable young man, with a large fortune in England; which, in marrying her, would be a desirable circumstance, and would prevent any unpleasant inquiry."

"Very true! What is to be done?"

"Nothing at present; I would not wish to interrupt or present harmony. Time has flown since you were here, I may truly say, on halcyon wings."

"I rejoice to hear it.—Pray remember, what I told you of Sybella must be kept secret. Your wife, or Louisa knowing it, would ruin all, as they undoubtedly would intrust it to Eleanor Dunstanville, who is deeply interested in my *quondam* rival's success:—but I may depend on you."

"Certainly! It is not the custom of our family to trust our secrets to women—they have so many dear friends;—and what is their bond of friendship? Secret

communication, which serves them for conversation when scandal flags."

"I wonder you married, when women stand so low in your estimation."

"I was in love; my mother was miserable to have me tied—as ours is not a marrying family;—my uncles were both old bachelors—and were always considered so by the ladies from the time they were eighteen—and since I was ten years old it was whispered to my mother that I should follow the family example. Great, therefore, was her happiness, when she found I was seriously in love with my dear Mary; but she dreaded my old bachelor habits would appear, and disgust my lively girl.—She lectured me well—and now, can scarcely credit her senses that a scion of this house can make so complaisant a husband.—Indeed, I flatter myself, I have indulged Mary's every wish, until this odious ball came in question."

Mary, seeing Belmont from the window, came to meet them; he handed her a letter from Eleanor. It merely contained a few lines to remind her and Mr. Stockdale of their engagement to them in October, to witness the festivities on Talbot's coming of age.

CHAPTER XVII.

Woman's a changeful and loquacious kind:
A thousand schemes their fickle hearts divide.
TASSO.

THE next day Mrs. Berkley called at Drummore.

"My dear Mrs. Stockdale," she said, "I am delighted to see you. I believe I have called ten times since last we had the pleasure of meeting. Your Cerberus always denies me admittance."

"How extraordinary!" exclaimed Mary. "When I have never been from home, my being merely in the garden, or in the grounds, should not deprive me of the pleasure of seeing you." She then expressed her disappointment at not being of the boating party.

"Well, that is the very thing I wish

to speak to you about. We intend making another, solely for the pleasure of your company at it; you are to fix the day;—and pray bring your fair friend; Major Horsely is distractedly in love with her.—I suppose he has already written a quire of paper in her praise."

"I certainly will be of your party.—When is it to be?"

"Name your day. We will have flutes and oboes—a complete band of music attending us."

"How delightful! Pray remember all is to conclude with a ball here."

Mrs. Berkley smiled.—"Will you pardon me," she said, "for objecting to that arrangement?—and, still further, were I to mention my reasons I should require pardon.

"I am all curiosity, and grant you liberty of speech!"

"Perhaps you are not aware," said Mrs. Berkley, smiling, "that the sound

of fiddles was never heard in this house, except to celebrate great events; such as the marriage of your spouse's father and grandfather, or the birth of an heir;—their ladies were never known to commit an action so derogatory to their rank as to visit a village ball, or to join in any of the amusements of the ladies of the neighbourhood, who were formerly invited regularly twice a year; —our invitations in return were rarely accepted. During our memory they have lived in melancholy grandeur. I remember my mother feeling great compassion for your mother-in-law, supposing her stiff formal manners were unnatural, and a force upon her youth, until she found they were the manners of her family. Her sisters were even still more *stand-off* than she was. They often visited here; and were plain, disagreeable young women, which did not save them from the dread of our young men being smitten with their charms.

Indeed, they scarcely ventured to speak to them, lest they should raise hopes they never meant to realize, or be accused of coquetry. In the same manner, your Mr. Stockdale's uncles were afraid to speak to the young women, lest they should steal their hearts.

"How extraordinary this dread of admiration! It implies as much vanity as a coquette's love of display!"

"I remember," resumed Mrs. Berkley, "I was at a ball given here on the birth of your Mr. Stockdale: the youngest, and most pleasing of his uncles danced a minuet with me: when it was over, he engaged me for the next country dance.—We talked more than usual:—and in the course of the evening, he was so negligent of decorum as to ask me to dance a second time. Our spirits rose on acquaintance, and we absolutely laughed and chatted.—Presently my mirth was a little damped by my partner's father observing us

attentively. At length he came up, and taking his son aside, said in a whisper, 'What do you mean, James, by being so attentive to that poor girl?—she will fancy herself ill treated. You know our house would never stoop to such an alliance—particularly when she has no fortune to make your apology to the world:—and I have no notion that my neighbour's peace of mind is to be disturbed by your vagaries.'

"Not a syllable of this whisper was lost on me,—the elder Mr. Stockdale had such a strong voice, and spoke so clear and distinct, that I could hear every word. My poor partner returned, looking like a culprit, and you may be assured we were very discreet for the remainder of the dance."

"Is it not wonderful," exclaimed Mary, "that Mr. Stockdale should fancy *me*, that am the very reverse of his uncles and aunts? '*Vive la bagatelle!*' has ever been my motto.—He must now

take the consequences; for I will exert all my energies to make this place less gloomy."

"I admire your spirit, but do not, pray, mention my name.—If you take my advice you will come to our party, and for his good-humouredly allowing that, —give up the assembling them here;—but, if possible, join us in the village ball room."

"You are right! I hope your friends will excuse me.—But if he wince at my attending the boating party, I will insist on having the ball here, and engage all the fiddlers."

"Right!——Men admire innocent beings without guile.—Why, by opposing us in such trifles, teach us artifice:—we must sometimes manage their humours as we do our babies. Pray," continued Mrs. Berkley,—"fix an early day; lest some plan should be devised to keep you at home; or, lest the old madam herself should

step out of her grave to lecture on the delinquency of the age."

"True," replied Mary; "this is Monday, the weather fine, and likely to continue so.—Suppose we have it to-morrow?"

"Agreed! I must now go and muster up our party;—and pray do not forget to give directions to your porter to have us admitted, and to have the boatmen in readiness.—Be on your guard; every obstacle will be thrown in our way; and mark my words; if you do not hear the sound of festivity in this, the first year of your marriage, you will never after be able to accomplish it!"

Mrs. Berkley now hastened to her carriage, leaving Mary rather disgusted at her freedom of manner and unsolicited advice. She felt more than ever sensible, that a degree of refinement is necessary to make society desirable; yet, she hastened to Louisa, to consult with her on the best manner of breaking

her engagement to Stockdale, which her friend advised her by all means to give up, if keeping it did not meet with his approbation.

Mary was shocked at her supposing she would so tamely submit. Louisa still remonstrated; representing, that the end for which she went, would, by his not approving, be frustrated; that her mind would be so occupied by reflecting on how he would consider her conduct, —that she would have no spirits, no enjoyment of pleasure.

Mary felt she judged correctly, and from the specimen she had just had of the courtly manners of her neighbours, thought it not improbable that Stockdale was in some measure right; but, now her spirit was up, and she replied, "Quite the contrary, my dear! I am all curiosity to try my powers,—he is so obstinate,—and, I am—do you say what are my faults," said Mary, with an inquisitive glance.

Louisa smiled, and replied from Pope:

"If to her share some female errors fall,
Look in her face, and you'll forget them all."

But, my friend," said Louisa, assuming a grave countenance, "I must tell you in plain prose, that you are inconsiderate and have never learned—shall I say it?—to obey."

"Very true, but Mr. Stockdale will never teach me,—Mr. Villars is the only man I could have learned that lesson from;—he never offended me by his superior sense, he condescended to reason,—to convince my understanding,—without giving me cause for provocation.—In short, he roused all my good qualities; and yet, he was less of a cynic than any man I ever met."

CHAPTER XVIII.

"There was a soft and pensive grace,
A cast of thought upon her face,
That suited well the forehead high,
The eye-lash dark, and down-cast eye:
The mild expression spoke a mind
In duty firm, compos'd, resign'd."

The evening was far advanced when Stockdale and Belmont returned from dining with ***. Stockdale was in low spirits, complaining much of the uncomfortableness of riding after dinner, and wondering at himself for consenting to leave home, where he had so much occupation.

Poor Mary's courage failed, she sat meditating, lamenting his being so out of spirits; and debated whether she

should then mention her engagement, or wait until the next day. There was no time to be lost; every instant the present moment was becoming more unpromising. Belmont at length proposed, that to make amends for a day so unpleasantly spent, they should go the next to a wood some miles off, to shoot crows. Stockdale consented very willingly, as there were some plantations there that required thinning, and he had appointed the gardener to meet him there.

"I wish," said Mary, "you would postpone your excursion for another day, as I have arranged with Mrs. Berkley a pleasanter one for you.—She was here this morning, and has, with some friends, made a boating party for us to the island—in place of the one we were disappointed of."

"Can I believe my senses?" exclaimed Stockdale, with acrimonious abruptness. "A lady of this house make parties with

the villagers—and mingle with them, not from condescension, but for the pleasure forsooth of their society."

"Well, as I am not a daughter of this house, you cannot say I am degenerate. Nor, do I think my conduct before marriage, gave much promise of my adopting the melancholy grandeur of your family."

I expected every thing, madam, from your duty—from your good sense;—which, like a rich vein would display itself in despite of the folly and vanity that concealed it from a common observer."

"I am really surprised at your choosing me, I must have appeared to you so vain and frivolous, unless you have a love of tyrannizing. If such be your disposition, there is one trait of my character that may probably annoy you. You will find I have more spirit than usually distinguishes the ladies of your house, and that I will not patiently submit to unreasonable restraint!"

Stockdale did not reply, as his answer must have been decisive as to peace or war. Mary continued—"You are placing me in such a novel situation, that I know not, never having brooked controul, how I shall act, or to what lengths my spirit will lead me. Do pray, dear Stockdale! be reasonable; for one day give up your pleasure; the birds will wait for you. Consider, for this month I have moulded my taste to yours—living in the deepest retirement.—Reward me therefore; let my taste rule to-morrow—we are to have music on the water. I think we shall spend a pleasant day."

"Are you, Miss Kelly," said Belmont, "as anxious for this party as your friend?"

"Were I at liberty to partake of this amusement, I acknowledge it would be to me delightful; but at present I am limited to the society of my friends, and can enter no mixed companies."

"Oh!" observed Stockdale, "you can be guided; you have discretion—some sense of propriety."

Louisa, much annoyed at Stockdale's praise, lest Mary should suppose he glanced at her faults, replied timidly, "I was brought up very seriously—my faults kept in constant check—and now I am only forbidden to share in amusement of which I never partook; therefore my conduct has but little merit."

Mary was charmed by the delicacy of her manner; and taking her hand affectionately, said—"We had better retire, my love!—Perhaps to-morrow may be wet; and until we are sure of the sun's shining, we had better not continue the dispute; for if the day be wet I will be very meek, and stay at home with a good grace."

The next morning was wet—they breakfasted as usual at ten; after which the gentlemen, casing themselves in their great-coats, were more impatient

than usual to go out; as the plantation lay at some distance, and Stockdale had business there, which he must attend to in defiance of the wet.

Mary smiled when she saw them depart, and instantly sent to the boatmen to desire they should be in readiness, as she would want them if the day cleared up.

Great, therefore, was her dismay, when the servant returned, and told her Mr. Stockdale had taken the boatmen to the wood.

"Do I not, my dear Louisa!" she said, almost crying, "require all your philosophy to bear this affront?—He knows I am afraid of strange boatmen, and therefore flatters himself he has me a complete prisoner."

She continued.—"He accounts it derogatory to his dignity that I should partake of amusements suitable to my sex and age. They say to children, they will give them a gingerbread wife—I

wish his mother had given him a wax doll, which he might keep in a glass case. What, my dear friend! would you do in my place?"

"Submit."

"Is it possible!—I thought you had more spirit, more decision of character; not such a milk-and-water composition! Forgive me, my dear!—how would you have me spend my time here? If I do not resist his secluding plan—what will become of me?—Would you have me, like sauntering Joan?—

"She eats, and drinks, and sleeps; what then?
Why then, she eats, and drinks, and sleeps again!"

"No; my dear Mary!—I would not have you become such a mere non-entity!—Have recourse to mental resources; they have a tendency to elevate the character, and, in some measure, to correct and refine the taste for pleasure. One educated as you are can never be alone. Besides, my dear! when Mr.

Stockdale sees you can restrain your thirst for amusement, he will become more indulgent."

The day was clearing.—Mary attired herself in one of her most elegant morning dresses, supposing some of the party would call. At twelve o'clock the sun shone in all its splendour. Louisa left Mary in expectation of visitors, whilst she went to inhale the fragrance of the flowers and shrubs, doubly sweet after the late rain. There was a balmy freshness in the air that revived her drooping spirits. Stockdale's roughness of manner in their last conversation had much depressed her, and made her anxious to return to her friends; likewise to avoid Belmont, who was every day becoming more disagreeable to her. She frequently resolved to complain to Mrs. Stockdale. She knew not how to act, and lamented the distance between her home and Drummore; as she had no one to consult, the responsibility of her

conduct lay entirely with herself. As usual, she walked down by the river side, and seated herself on a small bank, where she could hear the dashing of the water, as it fell down in a torrent, and murmured over its rocky bed. By degrees, the continuity of the sound lulled the perturbation of her mind—all recollection for the moment vanished, and she became quite absorbed in watching the foaming of the water, and the sun-beams reflected in it. She was not long in this abstracted state, when, to her great surprise, she saw Major Horsely. He accosted her in the politest manner, apologizing for his intrusion; assuring her that it was on his part unintentional—that he had come in by the shrubbery gate, and was deputed by Mrs. Berkley to borrow from Mr. Stockdale's steward the boat.—She, with others, he said, had called by appointment at Drummore, and heard, with great regret, the family were from home, and had declined join-

ing their party in consequence of the wetness of the morning; and that they had taken the boatmen, supposing the day would not answer.—"When such was the reply," added he, "you may judge my surprise at meeting you here."

Louisa, innocently supposing this answer a mistake of the porter's, explained to him that only the gentlemen were absent, and they had gone out early, before there was any prospect of the day clearing. Mrs. Stockdale, she said, was more sanguine; and had, within this last hour, expected them to call, and was very much disappointed on hearing the boatmen were not to be had.

"Perhaps," said Major Horsely, "you will have the goodness to inform her that Mrs. Berkley, with the whole party, are assembled near the shrubbery gate; and that, if only boatmen are wanting, she will find many able one's among them, who will be happy to have the honour of rowing her over. He then begged

permission to accompany her, that he might, with as little delay as possible, convey her answer to Mrs. Berkley. Louisa's averseness to this proposal was so evident, that he prudently changed his plan; and returned to the little gate; where, he said, they would wait until they received Mrs. Stockdale's answer.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"As clouds from yonder sun receive
A deep and mellow dye,
Which scarce the shade of coming eve
Can banish from the sky:
Those smiles unto the moodiest mind
Their own pure joy impart;
Their sunshine leaves a glow behind
That lightens o'er the heart."

At six o'clock the gentlemen returned from the wood. Louisa saw, by Stockdale's countenance, he had yet to learn Mary's absence. She thought he looked sheepish, and preparing to meet his wife's reproaches, for the disappointment he supposed his taking the boatmen had occasioned her. At length he ventured to ask for her; at the same moment his eye was caught by a note directed to himself. It was from Mary,

containing merely a few lines, to say she was gone with the party to the island, and requesting that he and Mr. Belmont would, on their return, follow her.

These few careless lines, written so simply, and with so much indifference as to his feelings, inflamed him with passion: his eyes flashed fire, and swearing an oath, in a voice far beyond its usual pitch, he inquired how she got there. "Had I not the boatmen with me? And did not I give strict orders that no one should be admitted?"

Stockdale paused abruptly. That last sentence was unguardedly uttered; he looked at Louisa, and, in a softer and hesitating manner, tried to explain it away. He then inquired of Louisa, how they brought Mary out, and induced her to venture on the water without her own trusty boatmen.—Louisa simply related what occurred. Stockdale was silent; and Belmont, in

referrence to her meeting Major Horsely, sneeringly observed:—"There is no question how he gained admittance, doubtless he is a second Leander."

"I do not understand your allusion," said Louisa, haughtily; whilst her alarmed look and burning blushes made Stockdale suppose there was more than common raillery in Belmont's meaning.

"Probably you may not choose," said Belmont, emphatically; "but you have given me no confidence; therefore, my fair Hero, I do not consider myself bound."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Stockdale. "Who do you call Leander?"

"Have you yet to learn that Major Horsely frequently crosses the river?—You see his inducement: Leander could not have a fairer when he swam across the Hellespont. Look! her countenance testifies the truth of what I say!"

"I cannot," said Louisa, with offended

dignity, " speak of Major Horsely's movements. I can only say he is a stranger to me, at least, so much so, as any man can be that I have only seen twice, and have had very little conversation with." On saying which, she left the room.

Belmont laughed.—" I am amused," said he, " when I see a prude in a dilemma. You see, she strictly adheres to truth, without betraying the many private meetings she has had with him!"

" I do not understand you. Pray explain."

" Do you not observe she walks out after tea, almost every evening, and does not return until it is quite dusk?—Yesterday evening, for instance, it was very late when she returned. Accidentally she often meets him in those walks, and may with a safe conscience say, she does not see him."

" You amaze me, Belmont! I think you must be mistaken.—I never met,

I think, a nobler minded young person; or one that would be farther from such mean equivocation.—I cannot believe she meets this man.—On what ground do you suppose it?"

"I will open my heart to you, and tell you the whole truth.—I love the girl—with passion love her! Perhaps, then, you will say jealousy may influence me, and, in some instances, make 'trifles light as air,' appear confirmation strong. Yet, judge yourself,—the facts are damning. You will say I have drawn the mildest conclusion in supposing her innocent from further offence, than in encouraging the addresses of one unknown to her friends. It is acting with a giddiness you would not expect, from one so seriously brought up."

"I am all impatience to hear the facts."

"You know she walks out every evening; she leaves this house unattended; I am told a man in a great coat wrapped

about him, walks with her. You look incredulous! The gardener and the butler are my authorities. Sometimes, after he leaves her, he departs in a little boat, which he manages himself; it belongs to a man living on the other side of the bank; and, on his being questioned, he positively denies having hired it to any one. Horsely is certainly in love with her; is it not natural to conclude he is the man enveloped in the great-coat? I wish you would make her come with us, that we may see if glances of recognition pass between them."

"I am shocked beyond measure at what you tell me; it absolutely lessens my confidence in the sex: my opinion of Louisa rated so high, that with her it falls in regard to the whole."

On their arrival at the island, they found the party dining in a large marquee, beautifully situated on a sloping lawn, so as to command the finest view of the opposite shore. The band was playing;

Stockdale felt the scene altogether was calculated to catch the youthful fancy; his wrath subsided, and he endeavoured to banish all trace of it from his countenance, lest he should check his truant's present enjoyment. She was seated at the upper end of the table, between Major Horsely and Mrs. Berkley.

Their appearance was most graciously hailed, and in a moment a bench was commodiously placed for them at the table. Their presence seemed to give such unfeigned satisfaction, that Stockdale insensibly felt flattered, and at length, in compliance with Mary's intreaties, cheerfully consented to accompany her to the village ball-room, where, at twelve o'clock, the party separated.

Notwithstanding the strong prepossession Stockdale felt, in consequence of Belmont's accusation against Major Horsely, he was charmed with his pleasing gentlemanly manners; he saw he was well educated, and had been

accustomed to move in the first circles. Stockdale, therefore, supposing Louisa attached to him, judged it better to put a stop to further clandestine proceedings, by inviting him to visit at Drummore; and accordingly asked him the day but one following, apologizing, in the handsomest manner, for not having visited him. Major Horsely appeared highly gratified by his attention, and with evident pleasure accepted his invitation.

CHAPTER XIX.

——"Me! accused me? Oh, that he had! I feel
Such inward lightness of a perfect heart,
I had forgiven——"

On mature deliberation Stockdale felt alarmed at the invitation he had given Horsely. He feared it was a bad precedent, and might unavoidably lead to the introduction of his brother officers. He spent a restless night. Louisa's conduct disturbed him:—that she should be guilty of such a flagrant breach of propriety—which he knew no one understood better—and conduct herself with such duplicity, shocked and disgusted him. Still he remembered how Belmont formerly wronged her, and therefore endeavoured to suspend his

judgment until he should hear what the gardener and his butler had to say on the subject; their veracity was to be depended on; they were trusty servants, having lived nearly thirty years in his family. Besides, Louisa was such a general favourite, that he felt confident they would make no charge against her from malice, or the love of scandal. He rose therefore at an early hour, and sending for the gardener, questioned him and the butler whilst he was dressing. They both allowed that she was known to walk in the dusk of the evening with a gentleman muffled up in a great coat, but they could not assert that gentleman to be Major Horsely; they knew, to a certainty, that he made good his retreat in a small boat. They could not say how often he came—to their knowledge three times. Stockdale questioned them no further. His sentiments towards Louisa underwent

a total change, and when they met at breakfast, they were no longer on a friendly footing.

Louisa was much chagrined on perceiving this change, which she could only attribute to his having listened to some invention of Belmont's. She had a large portion of pride, and felt considerably mortified at being the sport of these changes of temper, which she could not but regard as fanciful. It entirely destroyed the pleasure of being in Mary's society, and no longer feeling happy in being her guest, she ardently desired to return to her kind fostering parents.

Mary gave her an animated account of the ball, which she seemed to enjoy as much as any of the London assemblies, and desired her to make herself very smart, as Major Horsely was to call that morning. She said this, with an arch smile at Belmont.

Louisa was happy to receive this

information, and lest she should again meet him walking, or in the drawing-room, retired to her own apartment.

At three o'clock Mary sent to inform her Major Horsely was come, and that they requested her company at the summer-house in the garden, to eat some fruit.

Her reply was in the negative; that she was sorry it was not in her power, as she was engaged writing letters for that day's post.

At dinner Mary rated her for her seclusion; telling her what despair Major Horsely was in:—"But, I find," said Mary, with an inquiring look, "that you did not see him for the first time on Monday. Why this reserve?" added Mary, looking very grave: "I did not understand him when he lamented being innocently led to intrude on your time; and he fears you resent it."

"On the contrary," replied Louisa, looking distressed, "I had every rea-

son to be obliged to him.—I was silent on the subject, as Mr. Belmont said it was wrong in me, a visitor, to force acquaintances on Mr. Stockdale."

"He admires you very much: you have been his toast ever since.—He told me you were the most beautiful creature he ever beheld. Then," added Mary, smiling, "he took care to let me see he observed the striking likeness between us: therefore, let me warn you, my dear friend! not to remain longer in the back ground. He dines here to-morrow."

"Indeed! I am very sorry to hear it!"

"Is it possible! What dislike have you taken to him?"

"None in the world," replied Louisa, blushing deeply.

Stockdale spoke to Mary, making some observations on the dinner, which, to Louisa's great relief, changed the subject of conversation.

The next day was passed heavily by

Louisa. Stockdale treated her almost with slight, and Mary's manner, since she had known Major Horsely, was almost freezing, which poor Louisa supposed was caused by her apparent want of candour.

Major Horsely came as was expected, to dinner. Louisa did not make her appearance until they were all assembled; the paleness and langour of her countenance did not take from her beauty, exciting a stronger interest in the beholder. She was dressed plainer than usual, wore no ornament, but confined her beautiful raven tresses in a silk net, and modestly took her usual seat at the foot of the table next Stockdale, who was annoyed at her unusually grave manner and plainness of dress; for which, on his observing, she apologised, pleading a head ache as an excuse.

Major Horsely, as a stranger, was placed at the head of the table, next Mary; he made many efforts to engage Louisa's attention, but without success.

As usual, there was music in the evening. Louisa could not be prevailed on to sing, or to play, more than merely accompanying Mary in a duet. Stockdale was displeased, he had never before seen her assume such grave manners; and from a hint of Belmont's, he considered it as the height of artifice—an affectation of retiring manners, altogether overstrained. He felt mortified for human nature; and now, for the first time, congratulated himself on the heedless openness of Mary's manners. Feeling, however, a little alarmed at the entertaining of the Major being, by Louisa's shyness, thrown entirely on her, he resolved, since his company was no indulgence to his fair guest, that some time should elapse before he favoured him with another invitation.

However, the Major continued very assiduous in his attentions to the ladies, calling frequently of a morning; and at length lamented to Stockdale, Louisa's

reserve toward him, requesting his interest with her, if her affections were not already engaged.

Stockdale was more than ever surprised, as his speaking of his attachment for her to him, in so open a manner, did not appear as if there were any secret understanding between them. Horsely had, in a former conversation, mentioned friends of his, that were likewise friends of Stockdale's, and from them, he knew that this young man would be, even for a daughter of Listowel's, a splendid alliance.

It was settled Horsely was to dine there the next day. They agreed, if Louisa favoured his addresses, Stockdale was to send him an invitation; but of that Stockdale had no doubt. The lover was not quite so sanguine, but was encouraged by his friend, and left him with the pleasing hope of being summoned.

Stockdale then sent for his fair guest,

feeling impatient to inform her of her good fortune, and likewise expecting, that she would ingenuously account for the seeming mystery of her conduct. Her attaching such a man as Horsely almost restored her to favour, as he knew him to be a person of such nice honour and strict decorum: he was all curiosity to hear an account of their meeting, which he supposed must have been accidental, and not occurring so often, perhaps, as they had supposed.

Poor Louisa obeyed his summons in fear and trembling: and could form no idea of what was to be the subject of their conversation. Her host tried to reassure her, and, as the quickest means of doing so, repeated Horsely's conversation; expressing, at the same time, how happy he was, that she should, whilst under his roof, have such a handsome offer. He looked at her, expecting to see her animated countenance flushed from timidity and pleasure at her good

fortune; but, to his surprise, she was pale as marble; her beautiful eyes turned towards the ground, and veiled from his inquiring glance by their long dark lashes.

"You are silent, Miss Kelly: what is it I am to suppose? Does it imply consent? or, is it caused by your astonishment at the good fortune attending you? He offered her a chair; which, as she trembled excessively, she was glad to accept of; and after a little further hesitation, replied,—"I hope you will not, my dear sir, think me ungrateful for your goodness; but it is impossible I can ever be more to Major Horsely than I am at present. Pray," she said, looking up timidly, "add to all your favours already conferred on me, that of making known to him my sentiments."

"Is it possible! Miss Kelly, do I understand you right? Will you meet a gentleman evening after evening in the

dusk?" Louisa started, the colour forsook her lips, she looked almost fainting, whilst he proceeded—"and then refuse to marry him? What will your friends say? What am I to infer from such conduct?" He surveyed her attentively. "Guilty upon mine honour!" he said with a glance of ineffable contempt.

"Guilty of what?" inquired Louisa, the colour rising in her cheeks, and as if an unjust accusation had restored her self-possession. For a moment, Stockdale was awed by her look of innocence and haughty indignation: at length he replied,—"I beg, madam, to know the cause of your extraordinary conduct? And why you make appointments with a gentleman you refuse to marry?"

"I never," said Louisa, whilst proud blushes mantled her cheeks, "had an interview with Major Horsely out of your presence, excepting the two I told you of; and I think you are witness

that I always behaved towards him with the greatest reserve: a reserve, indeed, unnatural to me, caused by my situation,—and the fear, that on my account, you would encourage him more than you were otherwise inclined."

"Is it possible! Have you the courage to deny you met him—of late several times—alone—and in the dusk of the evening?"

Again Louisa's agitation returned; when she could speak, she said mildly —"I never deny my actions to those who are entitled to inquire.—I never saw Major Horsely, but at those times I have already mentioned."

"How then am I to account for what has been told me? How can I suppose my trusty, long-tried servants have deceived me?"

Louisa held down her head, her cheek was again blanched, and after many attempts, she with difficulty said:—

"They were most probably them-

selves deceived — or mistaken. — The gentleman I walked with was not Major Horsely."

"Ha! Then you acknowledge you had an appointment. Will you have the goodness to tell me the gentleman's name?"

"Excuse me; it is not in my power."

"What am I to suppose then? How highly improper! How can I answer it to your friends?"

"Let me return to my friends, if you think so harshly of me?"

"Certainly! But I must explain to them my reasons for so doing."

Louisa paused.—"I am willing you should do so.—I have nothing to conceal from my friends;" she said, her countenance brightening, and adding, with an innocent happy look—"May I beg you will not mention this circumstance to any one here? I should so deeply regret feeling lowered in Mrs. Stockdale's opinion: and I likewise

beg of you not to mention it to Mr. Belmont, he would torment me about it for ever."

"You need not fear him—he was my informer. A trivial misdemeanor he might quiz you about; but a glaring impropriety, like the present, he will keep a profound secret: in his power you are safe; for—he loves you!"

"A love that never has, that never will, show itself but in malice. Thank heaven!" she said, devoutly turning up her lovely eyes, in which the tears trembled, "I am not seriously in his power; this secret will only give him the means of annoying me."

Here a servant came into the room, and handed Stockdale a packet. He found, on opening, it contained cards for a village ball: stewards, Mr. Berkley and Major Horsely.

"All this nonsense, madam, your solitary walks have led me into. Had you remained quietly at home, Mrs. Stock-

dale would not have been of their parties. Now, I suppose, you will tell her of my having received these cards ?"

" Not if you do not wish it."

" I request your silence; and do not require you to observe greater secresy than you do in your own affairs."

CHAPTER XX.

" Pensive she seem'd, with various cares opprest,
A thousand thoughts revolving in her breast:
On her fair hand her lovely cheek she plac'd,
And prone to earth her starry eyes she cast,
All moist with tears."

THE time now passed heavily with poor Louisa. Stockdale never spoke to her, treating her almost with contempt. Whilst Mary, whom she loved with the tenderest affection, treated her with coolness.

Belmont came to her with hypocritical kindness, condemning the unwarranted cruelty of their behaviour, swearing it was quite unjustifiable; for after all, what had been her mighty

offence,—walking by moonlight with a gentleman.

"Oh, no!" interrupted Louisa, "my crime was not so heinous; the sun had certainly set, but still the heaven was arrayed with its glory when I went out, and I never walked longer than half an hour. But I do not attempt to justify myself, a young person should never, at any hour of the day, haver a clandestine interview; and my conduct, whilst in this house, should be as open to their inspection as to my parents."

He would not allow she was in any measure in fault, and recommended her not to endure an hour longer than she could avoid, their impertinent behaviour, and that he was ready to convey her the next day to Dublin or Killarney. Even this show of kindness was gratifying to poor Louisa: she would not, however, accept of his offer; telling him, she had written to Mr. Kelly,

who she expected would send for her, and until then, she must remain in her present very mortifying situation.

At length the day of the ball arrived. The cards of invitation had never been mentioned by Stockdale, and he supposed, from Mary's manner, she had not heard of them. He and Belmont were engaged to dine with Major Horsely, who had been, for the first day, on receiving Louisa's answer, in despair, and now bore his disappointment with heroic fortitude.

The ladies, therefore, dined alone, scarcely a word uttered by either. They had tea earlier than usual, silence still prevailing; and as soon as the tea equipage was removed, Mary retired to her room, saying, she had letters to write, which would occupy her time the whole of the evening, apologizing for leaving Louisa to find amusement for herself.

Her poor friend bitterly felt the

formal coldness of this address, and as soon as Mary had closed the door, she gave vent to the emotion, that during the evening struggled in her bosom. She sobbed and cried like an infant, fearing she had for ever lost Mary's affection, and almost doubting that she had ever loved her; 'or how could she with such ease cast me from her heart?' said she mentally—'disdaining even to speak to me on the subject of my offence, or to investigate the charge brought against me? How different, would have been my feelings, if one I loved were suffering such bitter humiliations!——how eager I should be to extenuate her offence, to make her sensible of her error, and reconcile her with her condemning friends. Oh, cruel Mary! did you bear me such attachment, you would not thus heedlessly point the arrow of scorn, that every one is levelling at your friend;—you, who alone have the

power of wounding me thus severely,—the love I bear you arming you against myself. How beautiful, how sublime that passage in the Psalms!—'Mine own friend, in whom I trusted, hath lifted up his heel against me!—For it was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it; but it was thou, O man, mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance!—We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company!' "Here," said she, taking up a Bible that lay on the table, "shall I find consolation."

In reading, her mind became more calm, but she was shortly after interrupted by Thomas (the footman), handing her a note.

It contained merely a few lines from Talbot, saying, it was of the utmost importance that she should see him instantly.

For a moment Louisa was at a loss

how to act; but a little reflection showed her the impropriety of seeing him after what had passed. She, therefore, in haste, wrote him a few lines as follows:

"DEAREST HENRY,

"The interviews we have already had "have ruined me in the esteem of my ex- "cellent friends here—so much so, that "I can remain no longer their guest, "and have written to my dear father to "send for me. Do not ask to see me "now, but write what you have to say.

"Ever your affectionate

"LOUISA."

ANSWER.

"Pray see me! You cannot well "remain where you are. I am afraid "of alarming you, and yet must put "you on your guard against Belmont. "He is an infamous fellow!—He designs "that you shall leave this place under

" his care—from his brother Walter's
" babbling we discovered his plans. I
" send you Edward's letter. Pray,
" dearest love! see me.

" And believe me,

" Your faithful

" HENRY TALBOT."

Edward's letter ran as follows :—

" From what I hear, my dear sister!
" you can no longer remain at Drum-
" more. Walter Belmont, to use his
" own expression, blabbed a circum-
" stance that renders it necessary you
" should be with a protector, aware of
" his brother's machinations. I was at
" Killarney. Your father showed me
" the last letter you wrote him. He
" would have sent Mrs. Jackson for you,
" but she was too ill to undertake the
" journey. I suppose you heard, since
" I wrote last, of my father's having
" purchased for me a cornetcy in the
" regiment now quartered in Dublin.

"I must be there to-morrow to sign my "returns. Therefore, it is better for "you to come to Dublin under my pro- "tection, than proceed to Killarney "under Talbot's, you would then be "so many nights on the road. There- "fore I will expect to find you ready "at two o'clock to-morrow.—I will "bring a chaise for you and the faith- "ful Judith. We shall, I suppose, reach "Dublin by five o'clock. Your former "lodgings, I believe, are vacant; and "you can remain there until Mrs. Jack- "son is able to come for you. I hope, "my dear Louisa! you will implicitly "follow my advice.

"And believe me

"Your affectionate,

"EDWARD LISTOWEL."

On reading the above, Louisa instantly sent her answer; wishing to delay her poor friend, the messenger, as short a time as possible; and thinking herself most fortunate in the absence of all the

family. She promised to accompany Edward, and to be ready the next day when he called.

Her only anxiety now was to depart without Belmont's knowledge; and as she did not expect to see Mary any more that night, retired to her room, and with Judith began to make preparations for her journey.

Judith supposed they were returning to the Glebe, and was in the greatest joy at the prospect of seeing her friends. Yet, for her part, she thought Drummore a *mighty purty* place; and the *sarvants*, gentry and all, were very agreeable genteel sort of folk. Only some of them a little *quare*, when they had that strange lad, *Bob*. Belmont, to *egg* them on—"Send him away and they are quiet enough."

"How can he molest you?" inquired Louisa.

"Oh! for matter of that we all likes his fun. Would you believe it, Miss? his

wallet makes as much love to me as his master does to you; and has the assurance to think we would be inconstant to our sweethearts for such *whipper snappers* as them. *We'd* see them hanged first—no more to be compared to my *illegant* Brian, with his beautiful red cheeks—not like the *wallet* or his master's—the pair of them have their cheeks as pale as a *Lonnon* lady's."

Thus Judith ran on; Louisa very little attending to her, being entirely engrossed by her own thoughts.

A little before ten o'clock, she heard a sort of bustle—presently Stockdale's voice was distinguished, inquiring for Mrs. Stockdale. Louisa opened her door, and heard a servant say, Mrs. Stockdale would not go to supper, and that she should not be visible for at least an hour.

Judith made little progress in packing, she had so much to say, and was so curious to know what caused their

sudden departure. Louisa gave her no assistance, allowing her to talk on, and amuse herself with conjecturing. They were thus engaged, when near twelve o'clock, they heard a heavy, yet hasty step in the gallery. The person stopped at Louisa's door, and knocked loudly and authoritatively. Judith asked who was there, disturbing the silence of night.

"Open the door instantly!" said Stockdale: "I must speak to Miss Kelly."

"Time your hours better," said Judith, shutting the door in his face. "She does not speak to mankind at this hour of the night."

"Is she in bed?"

"No;" replied Louisa, now coming forward. "What is the matter?—I fear Mrs. Stockdale is ill!"

"Why so—is she with you?"

"Oh, no!—Is she not in her own room?—I have not seen her since tea."

"Good heaven! is it possible!—Where can she be?—Surely she would not leave the house without your knowledge!"

"Oh!" said Louisa, smiling bitterly, "ever since the discovery you made I have lost her confidence. We spoke little during dinner, and she left me early in the evening to write letters."

"Excuse me, madam, for my suspicions; but one that is such an adept in mystery, I naturally conclude would lead others into it. I hear you had a visitor this evening."

"I had; but in respect to your prejudices would not admit him. However, I leave you to-morrow."

"I wish you every happiness!—Have you an idea where Mary is gone to? I conjure you to tell me!"

"Not the smallest:—had you not better inquire?—Shall I dress myself, and assist you?"

"No; I have rung for my servant—I

hear him coming. Thomas, where is Mrs. Stockdale?"

"Did you not know, sir, when you left the carriage she ordered it to remain at the door; and in a few minutes stepped into it, and went to the ball?"

"To the ball?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where is the carriage now?"

"In the coach-house; Mrs. Stockdale desired it should return for her at two o'clock."

"Order it immediately to the door!"

Stockdale trembled, and grew pale with passion, that his wife should degrade herself in such a manner. "That I should be forced, like a jealous don, to follow her to the ball, and become the subject of village conversation; affording them gossip for a twelvemonth!" said he.

"Oh, do not!" said Louisa, earnestly. "Listen to me, at least, before you allow yourself to be carried away by resentment: follow her by all means to

the ball, join in the amusement there for at least an hour, and then bring her quietly home. By this gentleness you will make her ashamed of having acted contrary to your will; and, from the generosity of her temper, I know you can mould her as you please. But, raise her spirit, and you will find it as high as your own, and as unpractised in the art of bending."

"I believe your advice is excellent; you are generous to give it me after my harsh conduct."

"You certainly forgot what was due to me;—but—for a moment of petulance, can I forget your former extreme kindness, and the tender affection I bear you both? Besides, what you insinuated against me had no point, conscious as I am, of my innocence, and that it will soon be made clear to you as the noon-day."

"I must believe you; you are as innocent as generous."

"God bless you! My mind is now

happy.—I shall go to-morrow with a light heart, and will never forget the gratitude I now feel for your confidence in me. I hear the carriage: good night!" She closed the door, and Stockdale, with a heavy heart, followed his gay wife to the ball-room.

CHAPTER XXI.

What heart of man unmov'd can lie,
When plays the smile in beauty's eye?
Or when a form of grace and love
To music's notes can lightly move?

HOGG.

MARY was Major Horsely's partner when Stockdale entered the ball-room: he stood at a distance behind, that he might make his observations before his wife was sensible of his presence. She was looking unusually pale, and in rather low spirits. He thought she never looked so interestingly beautiful, or so like Louisa; her countenance seemed to have acquired an air of sentiment. She was in earnest conversation with her partner, who

appeared all attention. At length it was their turn to dance. Her motion not light and gay as usual, but, always graceful, was yet languid.

When they had danced down, Stockdale came forward. Mary coloured like scarlet, but her husband was delighted to see the brightest pleasure animate her countenance on his appearance.

"I am so happy you are come!" said she, holding out her hand; "I really have not been in spirits, I was thinking so much of what you would say, and what you would think when you found I was from home. I am so much obliged to you for coming; it is indeed very good of you! Do take a partner! Take compassion on one of those wallflowers, and we will give you place."

Stockdale did as she desired, feeling highly gratified by the affection she so innocently testified for him; and in his inmost heart blessing Louisa

who had prevented his appearing as a grum, surly husband.

At one o'clock he proposed their returning home, to which she made no objection.

The next morning Mary did not make her appearance until twelve o'clock.

Louisa then acquainted her that it was necessary she should leave her, and that she was to go on that day to Dublin: she had heard from her father, and he would send Mrs. Jackson there for her.

Belmont was present;—he could scarcely believe he heard aright; and darted at Louisa a look of exulting triumph.

Mary burst into tears.—"My dear Louisa! surely you will not be so cruel as to leave me!—What will become of me in your absence!—I love you," she said, throwing her arms about her neck, "as if you were my sister! Dear Louisa! do not go!"

"Why then, my dearest friend!" said Louisa, quite overcome by this proof of her affection, and returning her embrace, "have you, these some days past treated me with such mortifying coolness?—But I am indeed delighted to find I have not lost your esteem."

"Esteem! no, I believe if ever there were a perfect being you are one.—But, —since I must confess my petulance, I was jealous with you for having a secret from me; and indeed, Louisa, I was angry and grieved at your proceedings towards Major Horsely."

"Oh, my dear friend! if that be all to interrupt our friendship, I am satisfied, and shall leave this with a light heart."

"Surely you will not travel alone?" said Mary.

"Oh, no! Judith accompanies me."

Belmont smiled, and exclaimed—"A proper *chaperon* for a young lady!—An attendant with beauty to attract

notice, and with humour, or Irish fun, to excite repartee! You are likely to have a pleasant journey, and have selected a most facetious companion.—But you shall have no adventures—as I intend having the felicity of escorting you to town."

"How are you to travel?"

"I intend," said he, with a most provokingly exulting look, "occupying the vacant seat in your carriage."

"That is not possible, as it is my intention to travel alone," said Louisa, haughtily.

"I hardly think you will be suffered to do so:—business takes me to Dublin, and if you do not accommodate me, I shall find it difficult to procure another carriage, as you know this village only affords one."

"I have engaged it," said Louisa.

"You had better," said Mary, "let Mr. Belmont take it; and I will either drive you, or send you in my phaeton

to *****, and there you can have carriages without number."

Louisa returned Mary her most grateful thanks: whilst Belmont looked dreadfully provoked. After musing for some time, he said, he was happy, at least, she would have no objection to his travelling the same road.

A carriage now drove up to the door. It was not Louisa's hack, as Mary and Belmont supposed; but it was Edward's.

Mary was delighted to see him, and entreated he would at least give them one day. It was not in his power, as he was obliged to be in town on that day, to sign his return.

"Now, Mr. Belmont," observed Mary, "your mind may be at rest about Louisa. I appoint Edward her protector. Therefore, unless you really have business, you shall not leave us."

Belmont looked enraged; but his respect for Edward kept him silent.

"How," asked Edward, "are we to travel? Will you allow me the honour of travelling with you and your beautiful Kerry specimen?"

Louisa smiled, assuring him it would be a great indulgence to her to do so. —"But," she said, "we must think of propriety. I fear I should appear too dashing, travelling with such a gay *militaire* for my companion. What says your sister? and what says Mr. Stockdale?—here he is; pray give me your opinion?"

Mary applied to him. Belmont would not let him give an answer, until he complained how his company was rejected; although, doubtless from his being older than Mr. Edward Listowel, and from Miss Kelly's being the daughter of his father's curate, she ought to be his charge.

Stockdale smiled.—"There is apparently, my good friend, justice in what you say. Perhaps, I should decide in

your favour. But, that I think," he said, in a whisper, " it might be a serious disadvantage to you. What would the gentle Sybella say? Is she so confident of her charms, as to allow you so long a *téte-à-téte* with one of the most beautiful persons I have ever seen. You may, therefore, allow Edward's claim to her guardianship; he is, certainly, her sincere friend; and who is not? As to my wife, I am sometimes jealous of the regard she bears her. She is a complete witch! she turns and changes us all as she pleases!" he said, with a sly glance at Louisa.

" How do you mean?" inquired Belmont.

" Oh! it would be endless were I to relate all her witcheries.—You, if I be not mistaken, have felt her transforming power?"

" No," said Louisa, " I never could influence in that quarter When I op-

pose him he is so vehement; and vehemence is always proof against my blandishments."

"Not always," said Stockdale, with a grateful look.

"Well, my dear Louisa! since we are to part," said Mary, "I am happy Edward goes with you. Will you not write to me when you arrive?"

"Certainly."

At two o'clock the sisters took a tender leave of each other. Belmont in the hack-chaise belonging to the village; Louisa and Judith in the chaise Edward brought, whilst he rode a horse of Stockdale's.

Belmont made another attempt to travel with Louisa: saying, it was such ridiculous prudery, and unnecessarily increasing the expenses of their journey.

Louisa was very much provoked at his close attendance, which prevented Talbot from appearing; who, she knew was on the road; but, in consequence

of Belmont's carriage keeping within a few yards of hers, he could not approach.

They had not gone many miles of the last stage, when Belmont's carriage broke down. The wheel came off, and on examination, it was evident to Edward that the catastrophe was not owing to accident; but must have been a preconcerted plan with the driver, in order to force Louisa to admit him into the carriage; and, although fully aware of the trick, still he did not think she could refuse.

As she had no alternative, she consented with a bad grace.

They had not gone a mile, when their driver increased his pace, till, by degrees, Edward could with difficulty keep up with them. This was not to be suffered; therefore, putting his horse in a gallop, he soon overtook them, and stopping the carriage, complained of being much fatigued by riding so fast;

and that, if Judith would sit on the seat with the driver, he would take her place in the carriage.

Louisa looked at him with gratitude, and so did her faithful waiting-maid:—saying—"God bless your honour! your company will do her a power of service; and if your *wallet* will lend me his big coat, I will make an *illegant* seat along side of Jem."

This was soon arranged, and our travellers arrived in town about seven in the evening. Belmont had scarcely spoken a word; whilst Louisa and Edward, although they could not talk on what most nearly interested them, yet found many topics on which it was delightful to converse; and when he handed her out of the carriage, declared he had seldom spent two hours so pleasantly.

Belmont burned with envy.—He saw, almost for the first time, her talents for conversation displayed, and

how pleasant she could make herself with those she liked; and at length the mortifying idea rose in his mind, that, even if he were openly to declare himself her lover, she would not accept him. He could with difficulty restrain his rage, and scarcely bid her good night.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Time will produce events of which thou cans't have no idea; and he to whom thou gavest no commission, will bring thee unexpected news."

The next morning, Belmont went out early to Mrs. Dunstanville's cottage; where, except with Sybella, he was no favourite; she did not smile on him so graciously as usual: her temper was soured by his long and frequent excursions; and she considered it would be too condescending to let him see the joy she felt on his return. Her little sharp, inquiring grey eyes, and pointed visage, appeared to him more disgustingly frightful than usual. They had a long conversation, both declaring they could not discover where Villars was, or what his plans were. Eleanor's and Talbot's were

equally to them a mystery, and they feared, in despite of their genius for intrigue, they must, with common observers, wait for information until Talbot were of age, and had declared his sentiments. Eleanor appearing so calm added to their mortification, as it was a certain proof their schemes were proceeding prosperously. Sybella laughed at his account of Mary's wedded life, and they amused themselves, conjecturing how she and Stockdale would pass their time when left to themselves, imagining they would soon quarrel without disguise.

As Sybella's manner was now softening towards Belmont, he ventured to look tender, and to pay her the most extravagant compliments;—her little grey eyes twinkled with pleasure, and she held up her skinny sallow hand, as if to hide a blush.

He succeeded so well in pleasing her, that she promised, if he assisted her in

obtaining revenge against Villars, and in securing her father's property, she would reward him with herself. On telling him her generous intentions, she extended her hand, which, in gallantry, he was obliged to kiss; he could with difficulty conceal his disgust, it presented such a contrast to the beautiful hand of Louisa. He wished to mention her arrival to Sybella, but feared her penetration would discover how vulnerable he was, even to the mentioning her name.

As Mrs. Dunstanville gave him no invitation, he was at liberty to return to Dublin. His first visit there was to Louisa.

She denied him admittance, and he left the door in high dudgeon, resolving to call at an earlier hour the next day.

He did so, but again received the same answer; he would have persevered, and watched her motions from the shop opposite, but he had that morning re-

ceived a summons from his father, which obliged him to return to the deanery without loss of time.

He was detained there a month, and it required all his mother's worldly prudence to induce him to answer Sybella's tender epistles, and to persevere in paying her that lover-like attention she so pertinaciously required. She always accepted Mrs. Belmont's invitations either to dinner or to tea; and then it was her lover's task to go for her, and bring her home in the evening; and although they had then, at least, a *tète-à-tète* for an hour, yet he was sure, as usual, to receive the next morning a tender billet. All this demonstration of love was disgusting to him beyond measure, and rendered intolerable by his passion for Louisa; his whole soul was engrossed by her, and he sometimes flattered himself, that if he paid her his addresses, sanctioned by his father, she would not be cruel. He felt almost

tempted to give up his ambitious prospects with Sybella, and take the humble Louisa, whom he supposed would not be quite portionless; and that whoever she married, would be forwarded in the world by Listowel. Insensibly as this idea gained possession of his mind, he relaxed in his attentions to Sybella. Mrs. Belmont was alarmed, and intreated the dean, as soon as possible, to let his son return to Dublin; or that all would be lost, *the fat would be in the fire!* and the poor boy had got quite enough of courtship for the present: and to tell the truth, although she was to be her daughter-in-law, she was an ugly, and disagreeable little minx, that required lots of gold to buy her a husband; and that, although so much older than the poor lad, he never could hope to see the last of her; she was so provokingly healthy, just like a piece of flint.

Robert smiled at his mother's anxiety to procure him leave of absence; think-

ing how different would be her conduct, if she suspected what temptation awaited him; and that she would not with such a light heart bid him good-bye, not expressing the least impatience for his return.

He had been away about a month, and hoped, during that period, his lovely Louisa would have forgotten any trifling disagreement they had on the journey. Knowing she was still in town, he hastened, immediately on his arrival there, to her lodging. A maid servant answered the door, who said, Miss Kelly was not at home; and, to his question of when she would return, the reply was, it was quite uncertain.—He then asked to see Judith Donahoe; she came, but did not, as on their former meeting in Dublin, express the smallest pleasure on seeing him;—on the contrary, she looked frightened, and to his inquiries for Louisa, and for herself, gave him short answers. He requested she would

show him into a parlour, that they might have some conversation, which she bluntly refused, looking very much alarmed; and added, that she had no room at command. He next proposed that they should walk out; but she run away, saying, she must bid him good morning, as she was very busy with the lady of the house.

This conduct appeared very strange to Belmont; he suspected Louisa was at home, and determined to be on the watch: he went into a shop opposite, from which he must see her if she came to the window, or walked across the room. He entered into conversation with the shopkeeper, who was esteemed a merry, facetious fellow, readily giving the information he wanted, although the inquiries were made with affected carelessness.

"I assure you," said the shopkeeper, "the ladies you mention, our opposite neighbours, are two of the most beau-

tiful women in Christendom; my son neglects his business for the pleasure of gazing on them; one is attendant to the other, who looks like a lady of the highest breeding, keeping herself very stately, never admitting visitors, except one young man: he, I guess, is either a lover or a brother, for he spends most of his time with her. There! now he is coming out!"

Belmont followed the direction of his eye, and to his amaze saw Talbot leaving the house, with his hat very much slouched down, and in a loose great-coat, evidently worn to conceal his figure.

Belmont was seized with the most dreadful jealousy, and for the first time discovered who the object of her preference was; for whose sake he was treated with severity; and for whose sake she had refused a gentleman whose alliance might be sought for by the first families in the kingdom. He struck his forehead with vehemence, exclaiming,—"Fool!

dolt that I was, to suppose that refusal of Horsely proceeded from her knowledge of my love, and to imagine that she was waiting for me, and affected that prudish manner in order to force me to declare myself!" He was besides much surprised to see Talbot in Ireland, whom he supposed on the Continent.

He resolved to make another attempt at Louisa's door for admittance; but it was all in vain, he was still told the same story: he then asked for Judith, but she also, learning town manners, chose to be denied.

His fury again returned; and he left the door, vowing revenge. It was then time for him to return to his hotel, and prepare for dining with Lord Ellismore, otherwise he would have returned to the shop to watch Louisa.

Belmont found his lordship in excellent spirits, as the time for his son's nuptials was so fast approaching, when he should have the felicity of calling Eleanor daughter, whom, he said, he

would select from all the females he ever saw. Belmont joined warmly in her praise, observing it was to be deplored that her cousin, who was equally rich, had not some of her attaching qualities.

Lord Ellismore smiled:—"I thought, my young friend, you had discovered that, with the mines of Golconda, she possessed fascination of conversation—that you relished her peculiarity—her bitterness of wit—her half sentences—and that even her penetrating grey eyes had not left your heart whole!"

Belmont affected, by laughing, to conceal his annoyance; and after some stammering, said—"It is ridiculous my denying such an accusation, for no one that has eyes can suspect me to be her lover. But I must explain.—You do not know me, my dear sir; my connexion with her is rather of an extraordinary nature:—and—you may smile—so far from being her lover, I am ab-

solutely her confidant.—Like the world, on our first acquaintance I laughed at her, and took amusement in displaying her defects; but I soon discovered she had wit, and the deficiencies in her organs of hearing were made amends for, by a quickness of perception altogether extraordinary.

"I saw how sensitive she was to unkindness; and taking pity on her cheerless state, told her what was going forward, and tried to amuse her. Then the powers of her mind; and, as you say, the bitterness of her wit, astonished me; whilst, grateful for my attention, she poured forth her whole soul to me. —You may have heard of Charles Dunstanville; he was her lover—you smile: well, I will allow he might have been a mercenary one;—and that poor Sybella, not meeting with much compliment from our sex, might have been easier caught with the semblance of courtship.—Yes, I do believe she loves

him, passionately loves him! her views were not mercenary:—although by an union with him she would secure her father's property, as he is his favourite nephew. The old gentleman is whimsical, and will not make a female his heir.

"Sybella discovered her cousin under the feigned name of Villars—followed him to this country; and now, her only hope is, that when your son marries her more charming cousin, her truant lover will, in common justice, take her as an incumbrance on the estate."

"She must be a high-minded lady!—her ideas of wedlock very dignified!" replied Lord Ellismore, dryly.

"Well, she will soon know her fate. How soon do you expect your son?"

"About the middle of October."

Belmont took his leave early in the evening. His Lordship did not press him to prolong his stay, having formed no very high idea of his principles, from his intimacy with and avowed friendship for Sybella Dunstanville.

The next morning, whilst Lord Ellismore was at breakfast, his servant handed him a letter that came by the penny post. It was curiously folded—*Mystery* was the impression of the seal. He opened it impatiently, and read as follows:

"Your son has been in Ireland for "this last month, and is now supporting "a lady at No. —, on the —— side of "Upper Gardiner Street; and it is said, "by good authority, that he will make "her his wife. The young person is by "no means destitute of attraction; but "so very artful, that it is much to be "feared, if he be not speedily liber-"ated from her spell, she will succeed "in inveigling him. No time is to be "lost.

"Do not doubt this information from "its coming in such a questionable "shape; you can easily satisfy your-"self of its truth, by sending one you "can depend on to watch opposite the

" house; from where, if your messenger
" has a little patience, he will see Mr.
" Talbot either leaving her or gaining
" admittance.

" Your sincere friend,

" ANONYMOUS."

His lordship was very much shocked; feeling equally hurt and displeased that his son should thus shun his presence, when he had been ever such an indulgent parent.

For a moment he was undetermined how to act; when, ringing for Morrisson, a faithful servant who had lived with him from a boy, and was now grown old in his service, always showing the strongest attachment to him and his family. From his care and attention to him in many severe illnesses, Lord Ellismore had long ceased to regard him in the light of a mere servant, and now considered him the properest person to consult as to the best means of drawing Talbot from this

shameful connexion, and awakening in him a sense of what was due to himself and the honour of his family.

Morrisson was as much surprised as his master on reading the letter, and more disposed to doubt it;—therefore, before the matter was debated further, he proposed going to Gardiner Street, and watching for his beloved young master.

Lord Ellismore consented; charging him, however, to keep himself concealed.

In about an hour his trusty servant returned, looking very sorrowful.

"Hah! I know by your looks," said Lord Ellismore, "that my fears are not groundless. My son is deceiving me, and I never can regard him in the manner I formerly have done. I wonder he is not afraid that I should meet him; knowing how constantly I am in town."

"My poor young master! whom I always thought so dutiful and so high-minded, how could he demean himself

so!—but it is all for the love of that gipsey—however, you might meet him and not know him; for he has a lynx-eye, and perceiving you afar off, would have his hat still more slouched, and that big coat he wears would, were he on his guard, conceal him even from me. He is grown very thin, and he has not a joyous pleasant look as formerly."

"Did you find out her name?—Does the house belong to her?"

"Oh! she is merely a lodger;—she is very beautiful—lives retired, sees no company but your son, and sometimes his friend, Mr. Edward Listowel.—Her name is Kelly.—"

"Kelly!—oh! that brings her to my mind. Was she not bred up in the country?"

"Yes; with one Parson Kelly."

"And supposed to be a natural daughter of Captain Listowel's. Now I understand that good fellow, Belmont's hints, when, last Winter, he mentioned

to me Listowel's wish to have her invited to Dublin by his wife, and go out, and be presented to company with his daughter, expecting she would make a great match by her beauty! Yes; he will find a match in our family; but not in the manner he expects. I think, Morrisson, I may depend upon your attachment to me, and on your assistance in this business?—Above all, I exact secrecy from you. My son must be kept in ignorance of my knowledge of his conduct:—we must be cautious before Brian, whom I took from him in place of Berger, as being a more useful servant on the Continent. I will try and consider how to get rid of this syren; and hope by the evening to arrange some plan for that purpose."

CHAPTER XXIII.

My wishes are complete—my joys arise,
While I'm haf dizzy wi' the blest surprise.
And am I then a match for my ain lad,
That for me so much generous kindness had?
Lang may Sir William bless these happy plains!
Happy, while Heaven grant he on them remains!

ALLAN RAMSAY.

DURING dinner, Lord Ellismore explained to Morrisson his plan of procedure; and as soon as it was over, sent him to watch his son's movements: at that hour they supposed he was with his fair Dulcinea, he generally leaving her early in the evening.

As soon as Morrisson saw him depart, he was to hasten with the intelligence to his lord, who was to have a coach in waiting to bring her off.

The trusty servant returned almost immediately. He said, both the young

gentlemen had dined with Miss Kelly, and were gone to the play.

"How unfortunate!"

"Rather say how fortunate; we have the field to ourselves; the poor thing never going any where, nor ever admitting any visitor."

"Bravo! we shall return victorious! There is no time to be lost: we shall soon settle this hussy!"

Poor Morrisson trembled; he had never seen his master so exasperated; and dreaded this proceeding would cause an eternal breach between him and his favourite, Master Harry: he wished Lord Ellismore to pursue a gentler course, and not by such a rough measure, needlessly irritate the proud spirit of this fine youth.

They left the carriage at the top of Gardiner's Place, with directions to Brian to be on the watch for further orders. They then walked slowly up Gardiner Street: Lord Ellismore gave a

loud single knock at the door ; saying to his companion, " if we pass for tradespeople, there will be more chance of our being admitted."

An awkward servant maid opened the door, and to their inquiry for Miss Kelly, replied, she believed she was not at home, but that she would go and see. Lord Ellismore followed her to the foot of the stairs, and heard her say, when she opened the drawing-room door :

" Oh ! Miss, if there *be'ent* be two of the finest *ould* men you ever see below ; and, but for their single knock, I should think they were lords !"

Some one replied, " I wonder what they want !"

" Shall I show them up ? It will never be known, as they are only some of the tradesfolk, and then we shall know what they have to say ; and besides, you are so melancholic here by yourself, you want a little *devarsion*." The door here closed, and they heard a little commotion up stairs.

The maid soon returned, and said Miss Kelly wished to see them.

On their entrance, they saw a beautiful girl, dressed in a very handsome pelisse and bonnet, the latter, rather fancifully put on the back of her head, so as to show off a redundance of fine hair.

In a very strong Kerry accent, she asked them what their business was; and added—"I *dosent* recollect ever seeing you before,—*yese* are not acquainted with me?"

"We have not that honour, madam," replied his lordship. "We came, hearing of your extreme beauty, and that a gentleman of the name of Talbot keeps you a close prisoner, never permitting you to leave this house.—In consequence of this report, a solicitor of eminence has applied for a *Habeas Corpus*, and we requested to be deputed to bring you before the judges; who wish to learn from your own lips, whether you consent to the close confinement in which you are kept; or would prefer the liberty which

is the birth-right of all in this emerald isle.—You now see before you, madam, your champions, ready to step forward in your defence, and restore you to that world, of which you are the brightest ornament; although, perhaps, considering the many murders those killing eyes may commit, it were safer and better to leave you in your present thraldom; and that Mr. Talbot should be your only sacrifice."

His fair hearer looked in amaze during this speech, by turns flattered and terrified.

"Your honour may be very good:—but what you are saying to me appears great *balderdash!*—sometimes you *gave* me a dash of the *blarney;* but for all you are so gentle, and speaking as if *butter would not melt in your mouth*—I *sees* the wolf in your eye; and *cute* as you are, don't think to coax me before *no* magistrate: I don't know what you are at, or what you can have against

me.—Talking to me of *corpses!*—I can't be the person *yese wants;*—and as to murder I never was spoken of for the like, unless you call killing a chicken murder: it was the biggest I was ever guilty of."

Lord Ellismore stared.—"May I have the honour of hearing your name from your own ruby lips?"

"Miss Kelly to be sure, bred up among the mountains by one parson Kelly, who made me a fine *schollard.*"

"Then you are the very person I want. There are many suppose you confined here against your inclinations, presuming so young and so beautiful a person does not love retirement."

Judith, (it is presumed the reader has discovered her), smiled, and said in a playful manner—"How well you knows what I *loves;*—to be sure I *passes* but a dull time now, but the *ould* gentleman is not *Mathusalem;* and when he dies, and I *marries* Talbot," said

she, winking her eye at Lord Ellismore, "I shall have my *fill of fun*, such banqueting and *junketing*."

Lord Ellismore could restrain his rage no longer: his eyes flashed fire, and raising his voice far beyond its usual pitch, he exclaimed, lifting his cane as if ready to beat her—"You marry Talbot! Do not hope—but I am wrong to treat such an idea seriously. —I tell you what, child, he is making a fool of you, and you will certainly lose your character living with him here!—Come, child, I have a fine coach and will take you away."

"Your coach, indeed! It is not *the likes* of me to sit in such a *dirty concarn*. I suppose you are the driver of it; your old *crony's* wig is just the cut of a coachman's. Pray what's your number? that I may have *yese* before the magistrate, *ye* audacious *ould* varlets, wanting to trepan a poor innocent girl from the country."

"What an impudent baggage!—and what a tongue!—I tell you what it is, girl; if you do not come with me this moment, I will send you to the house of correction!"

Judith looking dreadfully frightened, burst into tears, and said—"Why, what call have you to me?—Who are you?"

His lordship thundered out—"*Lord Ellismore!* Tremble, girl!—I am the father of your infatuated lover!"

"*Aubabou!!!*—We are all in the wrong box!" said she, looking frightened, and yet laughing; and added, in a lower tone, "then I believe I must confess."

"Confess!—I will listen to no confessions! Your parson Kelly may listen to them, not me.—You will get no redress from me or mine.—Come away!"

"Oh, dear! You put me all in a *twitteration,* and make my heart pant

like a bird's pursued by a hawk; and sure enough you are like one, you have just the eye. *Musha! musha!*—why should I be so full of my fun!—with your single knock, thinking I should have some sport with the two old smart tradesmen. Oh! if you had but the luck, like other quality, to have made a *big cessarara* at the door, I should now be safe, and not *run'd* away with.—What will mother say, and father!" said Judith, crying piteously.

"Do not cry, girl; for after all, I should not be angry with you. Come away quietly; and a great deal of your future happiness depends on your docility now."

"Well," said she, brightening up;—"what will you do with me, if I go away with you?"

"I will give you a hundred pounds, and marry you to my servant."

"Not the *Frinch* man you *swapt* with Talbot?"

"No! to honest Patrick Brian, from the kingdom of Kerry."

"I *asks* no better; I will go with you, and would marry him a hundred times sooner than either you or your son.—But I should just like to write a bit of a note to your son, to give him a knowledge of where I am gone. Will you write it for me? as I have a whitlow on the finger I *holds* my pen with."

"You cunning gipsey! you want him to come out and rescue you!"

"Well," said she, laughing, "I will *humbug* your lordship no longer;—I am not Miss Kelly—I am only her servant. So you may go away; she is not in the house."

Do not think to deceive me; servants do not wear such fine jewels.—When would a servant's wages purchase such a gold chain as is round your neck; and what service could you perform to entitle you to wear such a beautiful diamond broach; and still handsomer is the

diamond pin in the front of your hat. The only indulgence I will grant, is to allow you a few moments to put up your clothes, whilst I give directions about the carriage; through that open door I see your bed-room is inside this; I will lock the outer one, and leave my good friend here to guard it. If you make the least row, he will enter and carry you off."

In about ten minutes he returned, and to his great surprise, saw his prisoner had made no preparations. He inquired how she had employed herself in his absence. She declared, she was so *astounded*, that she was incapable of action. He glanced over some papers that were on the table, and saw, placed in a volume of Lord Byron's poems, a note directed to his son.

"Ha! Mrs. Simplicity," said he, eagerly drawing it out, "I am glad to see your finger is well, that I may have the pleasure of reading your composition."

Judith laughed, and tried to snatch the note from him, with an anxiety of manner that removed any doubt he had, that such beautiful hand-writing could have fallen from the pen of one with such coarse vulgar manners. It struck him that, perhaps, she was acting a part, the easier to regain her liberty; that, perhaps, she knew him from his first entrance, and hoped by her vulgar, forward, and affected manner, to deceive him as to the power she might have over his son's mind. Still, notwithstanding her extreme beauty, there was a vulgar turn in her countenance, that did not indicate a well-informed mind. But all his doubt of her want of refinement vanished on perusing the note he held in his hand. In it she expressed the tenderest affection, in the most polished, and yet in the most simple style. It was written to inform her lover, that she found remaining in her present lodgings, visited only, and constantly, by two young men,

was injurious to her reputation. Therefore, she had accepted the invitation of a friend, who recommended her for the present, not to let him, or her dear Edward, know her place of residence.—That she hoped and trusted her concealment would not last long, and that it would lead to the development of happier prospects; which might allow her, without presumption, to hope for his father's consent; without which she was still resolved never to be united to him. But, if her hopes proved fallacious, she expected he would not give way to despair; but join her in praying for fortitude to bear with resignation the bitterness of their fate; and never forget that in this world they were merely in a state of trial, and everlasting happiness the object of their existence. Yet, at the same time she acknowledged, she could never wish him to forget her. The paper was here blistered with her tears. She added, that, although her

present feelings were so mournful at the idea of bidding him adieu, she had every reason to cheer him with the brightest hopes; and, at all events, this was not a farewell letter, for she would write to him again when her fate was decided. She concluded with her best love to Edward, and signed no name.

His lordship's first impulse was to tear the letter: changing his mind, he put it in his pocket.

"You might as well leave it where you found it," said Judith; "it contains no information, and he will be mad, raging out of his *sinses*, if he does not find it."

"He has already lost his senses, when he thinks of marrying such an artful hussy."

He then hastened her down stairs, handing her into the carriage, in which was Brian; Judith laughed, saying—"It is an ill wind, my lord, that blows nobody luck. I never expected to

come to such—or," said she, with a most joyous look, seating herself by her lover, " to such happiness."

On arriving at the hotel, she was ushered by her intended into his lord's sitting-room, who renewed his offer of a hundred pounds down, if she would forthwith marry Patrick Brian. To his amaze she dropt a low curtsey, and giving her hand to Patrick, said, if he paid the money with as little reluctance, all would be well!

Still Lord Ellismore thought her consenting to this match all a farce, in order to obtain her liberty; which he was determined she never should whilst his son was single, but as Brian's wife. What puzzled him was, that the greatest happiness was expressed in the countenance of both, and that Brian, not restrained by his presence, kissed her hand when extended to him: however, he considered she must have been much accustomed to low company, and per-

haps had been in the habit of treating Brian as a friend.

As Brian was leaving the room, he asked under what name he was to procure the licence.

"I have already told you!" interrupted Lord Ellismore, impatiently.

"You are to take me," said Judith, laughing, "for better for worse, for lady or for Abigail."

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Now all is done; bring home the bride again,
Bring home the triumph of our victory!"

The following morning, Talbot and Edward went, as usual, about eleven o'clock, to Louisa's lodgings. They were dreadfully shocked on discovering she was gone, without leaving any letter or message for them. The same idea occurred to both, that she had been spirited away by Belmont; but on making inquiries from the people of the house, they found that could not be, as she went with an old gentleman, who came for her in a handsome chariot, which drove to the door immediately after their going to the play.

They next inquired if she took her clothes, and if she were in low spirits.

They replied she appeared in great affliction; that Miss Judith was crying after her, and that she brought a small trunk.

Talbot thought most probably the old gentleman was Mr. Kelly, in which idea he was strengthened by the lady of the house, affirming he was a clergyman; and Mr. Kelly had always shown such averseness to him, as her lover, that he readily concluded he had strictly forbidden her writing, or leaving him any message; and he was certain no other person could influence her to treat him so cruelly. He now remembered how uncommonly low she had been when he bade her farewell, and that the mournful tenderness of her manner struck him at the time so forcibly, that he would not have left her but for Edward, who was anxious to have him at the play; it was a new

one, the author was their friend, and had solicited their support.

Edward, however, did not think the old gentleman could be Mr. Kelly, from what he saw of him when at Killarney; knowing he was not in a state to make a long journey. "Besides," observed he, "where could he procure a handsome chariot? But why do we not send for Judith, she would solve all our doubts."

But, to their great dismay, they were informed on calling for her, that in half an hour after Miss Kelly's departure, two old men came in a hackney coach and took Miss Judith away; who was in very good spirits, and did not betray the least unwillingness to accompany them.

Talbot had it still so strongly in his mind that Louisa was gone to Killarney, that he resolved on immediately following her; and requested Edward would remain in Dublin, to make

every search for her there, and in its vicinity; and the first that succeeded in gaining any intelligence of her, was to send an express to the other.

Lord Ellismore had spies to watch his son's conduct; and when they informed him of his despair on discovering his bird had flown, his lordship again became confident that he had the right person in confinement, and that she was merely acting a part, which he must believe was not very contrary to her nature. He considered much refinement could not be expected from a poor curate's daughter, living entirely secluded from even the middling ranks of society. He supposed her companions had been among the very lowest; and that her extreme beauty had dazzled his son, and blinded him as to her vulgar coarse manner, which he could not suppose she could so well feign, unless in some degree natural to her; and he still was certain, that nothing could be far-

ther from her thoughts than marrying Brian; to whom, he could not but acknowledge, she did not show the least averseness; but, on the contrary, he saw a sort of vulgar triumph in her eye, expressed occasionally in winks and nods at Brian, which he did not think it possible a refined mind could assume. Her impatience, likewise, to receive the money, surprised him; and her finding amusement in counting it over and over, and appearing so delighted at having such a large sum in her possession.

When he mentioned to her that Dean Belmont should perform the ceremony, she coloured violently, and said, his son had been her *bachelor*, and that she would not wish him to see her demean herself so.

This objection appearing very reasonable, his lordship procured another clergyman, and to his amaze they were united without her making the smallest objection.

Lord Ellismore immediately sent an express after his son, to let him know the lady he sought was then at Longwood, and was the wife of his servant; acknowledging he had influenced her to the match, partly by entreaties, and partly by giving her a fortune.

Talbot was almost distracted on receiving this letter—he could not for a moment entertain so wild an idea as that Louisa would marry a servant, or forsake him for any man in the world;—nor could he suppose his father would deceive him, or tell a positive untruth. This letter followed him to Killarney, where he found the venerable Mr. Kelly uneasy at not having heard on the day appointed from his darling:—they were certain of receiving one the next day. It came not—an hour after the post Lord Ellismore's alarming letter arrived, and was very near causing the death of Mr. Kelly; who lamented his extreme feebleness, which prevented his fleeing

to the rescue of his child. He was certain she would have written to him if at liberty.—Circumstances now convinced him she was in Lord's Ellismore's power, to whom he wrote by Talbot, requesting he would restore him Louisa, and send her under the care of a trusty servant to lodgings, to remain until he was able to fetch her; and he was determined, old and feeble as he was, to be himself her escort home. He assured his lordship, he might depend on his word, that she never should interrupt the peace of his family.

He wrote this letter while Talbot's horses were coming round, who was impatient to commence his journey; determining never to stop travelling until he reached Dublin; promising as soon as he arrived there to write him an explanation of this mystery.

Mrs. Kelly could not understand what made the gentlemen so miserable, unless some misfortune had happened to her

dear child. She distressed them by her inquiries, which they were cautiously obliged to parry, lest the truth should overcome her; and her husband feared the suspense they would probably be in until the arrival of Talbot's letter, would be too much for her.

It was late in the evening when Talbot arrived at ******. He felt so fatigued he was obliged to stop at a wretched inn, the best the village afforded. It had been his intention to ride until he came up with one of the Dublin coaches; but the night was falling so fast he judged it better to wait its arrival there. His mind was in a fever, and he became so very ill that he was obliged to accept the proffered bed, although not the most inviting in the world.

CHAPTER XXV.

"An action is perceived to be right or wrong, independent of the actor's own opinion; but he is approved, or disapproved, held to be innocent or guilty, according to his own opinion."

The Listowels were now daily expected from England, and Mrs. Belmont drove almost every morning into Dublin, in the hope of meeting them and her daughter Lady Wilmot.

In one of these excursions she met Lord Ellismore, who was very anxious to see her, as he knew she was acquainted with Mr. Kelly's adopted child.

He could no longer suppose, that Judith could have been so favoured; or, that if she ever had hopes of being his son's wife, she could so contentedly

marry Patrick Brian; he began to fear he had been duped, and likewise to feel uncomfortable at having acted so roughly to a person, for whom his friend Listowel appeared much interested; he dreaded he should bear the odium, whilst, perhaps, the lady he sought, was flying for protection to his son. He therefore hoped, without betraying his secret, to discover from Mrs. Belmont how far he had erred; and accordingly, very graciously accepted her invitation to breakfast the next morning, or the first fine morning; and, as an inducement, she said, he would very probably meet her son and daughter, Sir Offingdon and Lady Wilmot, who would immediately on their landing hasten to the deanery.

Mrs. Belmont felt very much elated on his so readily accepting her invitation, entertaining some hopes Mary-Anne was the inducement. She thought it would be a pretty attention, to invite his most particular friends to meet

him ; and accordingly wrote to the Dunstanvilles, and sent an express to her sons, who had not visited her for some time.

The next morning was hazy. Mrs. Belmont therefore thought it next to impossible that her friend could on such a disagreeable morning, think of venturing out. She ran therefore into her daughter's room—"Anne, my dear!" said said she, entering, "do not put on your elegant gown this morning ; it is so unpromising, not a man of them will come. Keep on as usual, your wrapper, and hasten down. Your father wants his breakfast ; I am glad you have not taken out your *papillotes ;* see my trim !"

Her night-cap was half on and half off, partly shading a forehead, yellow and greasy from want of ablution ; a bedgown, that once had been white, flowing unconfined, discovered a wrinkled bosom, that, from time, or from being too much exposed, had lost all de-

licacy; and a corset, that defied all perception of its original colour, was bursting from the prodigious size of the form it was intended to enclose. The petticoat was of rather a darker hue than the bedgown, reaching down nearly to her ankles; not concealing a pair of old yellow silk stockings, drawn up tightly, over ancles that often extorted from her husband, that witty saying, of '*beef to to the heels!*' her slippers were old and slipshod. "See what a trim I am in!" repeated Mrs. Belmont; "I will just tidy my cap and wrapper, and then I will run down stairs, and wet the tea. Your father, when he is in haste, loves to see us in *dishabille;* not to be starched out for company, like Miss Kelly. I warrant if we breakfast at eight o'clock, she would be dressed to the last pin's point.—Poor thing! how she mopes and watches the post, and the raps at the hall door. I *vow* and *purtest* she is like a heroine in distress!—I wish Lis-

towel would take her off our hands. I must say, his forcing her down our throats was more free than welcome; I do not love such *cattle*. There now, Walter will be home to-day, what shall I do, if she make a fool of him?"

"Rather, madam, let your fears be alive for Robert."

"Oh, no; she is too *cute* to meddle with a younger brother, although he may be the prettier gentleman. Watty would be the catch—she would like to step into my shoes when he steps into his father's. I will go and call for the kitchen—pray, dear! come down soon."

They were not long seated at the breakfast table, when a carriage drove to the door—the dean was obliged to retreat with his wife and daughter, as he had not taken off his old red night-cap and dressing-gown. He grumbled very much at Mrs. Belmont's interrupting their domestic quiet by asking company at such unseasonable hours. They

had only time to make their escape good, when Lord Ellismore entered. Neatness and regularity were, in his estimation, feminine virtues.—He had heard the bustle of the running away, and had loitered on the stairs in order to give them time. Expecting to find the room empty, he was doubly pleased and surprised on finding a beautiful young person seated at the lower end of the breakfast-table, simply attired, but critically neat. She arose on his approach, politely offering him a seat at the table, and apologizing for the absence of Mrs. Belmont, who she said, would return in a moment. He smiled when he viewed the tea-cups half emptied, the eggs just opened, the plates supplied with bread and butter; and the chairs seemingly but that moment pushed aside. Louisa understood his glance, and coloured deeply; whilst his lordship, regretting having given her a moment's pain, tried to divert her mind from the broken

bread and deserted breakfast-table. He spoke of the Messrs. Belmonts, and wondered how they could, at that season of the year, prefer lounging about the streets of Dublin, to their father's beautiful place; particularly when honoured by her presence, it possessed such a powerful attraction. To this compliment she bowed her thanks. They then spoke on other subjects, and he was charmed with the refinement of her mind, and the gentleness of her manners.

At length, Mrs. Belmont made her re-appearance.

"Louisa, my love!" she said, "I hope you have entertained Lord Ellismore, and not suffered his lordship to miss my temporary absence from the breakfast-table.—To tell you the truth, my lord, had you come in unawares, you would not have known one of us. It is such a cloudy morning we did not expect any body; and my poor dear dean was in such a hurry for his break-

fast, that he proposed, by way of a joke, that we should all sit down in our *dishabille*," and she said, smiling, "Louisa, here, could not follow our example—she, poor child! rises with the sun; and, I suppose, was dressed two hours before we were up."

"I fear," observed his lordship, looking at Louisa with great interest, "you suffer from your early rising—you look as if near fainting, and have changed colour ten times in these last few minutes!"

"Oh, she is always doing that; although, for my part, I know not what she has to fret her.—Oh! that's true, my lord; it almost went out of my head to ask you, if that girl from Killarney is really married to your footman?"

"She is, indeed, madam."

"Do you hear that, Louisa?—a shrewd, forward minx!—I am glad she is disposed of—I always feared her inveigling Bobby or Watty."

The dean and his daughter returned to the breakfast table. The conversation became general. Lord Ellismore courted every opportunity of drawing out Louisa, to Mrs. Belmont's great mortification, as she hoped her daughter Anne was the object of the visit, and would engross all his attention. But she was determined, as she said to herself, to put *Miss all of a heap!* which she effected by asking Lord Ellismore where his son was; if he was still with that idle chap, Edward Listowel.

"No; I fancy he is now on the road to Dublin."

Whilst he was speaking, a servant came to inform him that Mr. Talbot was coming up the Dublin road in his curricle.

Lord Ellismore requested they would stop him;—he was most particularly anxious to have an interview with him before he went to Longwood, and found his *quondam* mistress in the capacity of house-maid, or supernumerary.

During the bustle occasioned by Talbot's arrival, Louisa made her escape.

She was very ill and weak from meeting so many agitating circumstances in the last hour. She was near fainting, and found her head so light when trying to ascend the stairs to her own room, that she was obliged to give up the attempt, and went into the library, by a door opposite the stairs. She had not known Lord Ellismore until Mrs. Belmont's entrance; and then, though dreadfully agitated by his presence, she was obliged to remain, as she had been deputed to fill out the tea.

The meeting between Lord Ellismore and Talbot was equally painful to both; and so different from any they ever had before, that for a few moments neither could speak. The gloomy severity, however, of the father's countenance relaxed, when he beheld his idolized son looking miserably ill; a feverish brightness burned in his expressive dark eyes; whilst the

extreme paleness of his countenance formed a striking contrast with his dark hair: he was grown so thin that his lordship dreaded he was falling into a rapid decline: this idea was strengthened by the hectic colour of his cheek, when he attempted to speak. The old gentleman gazed on him in mute alarm; the reproaches died away on his lips; and extending his hand to his son, he said, in a voice expressive of the strongest interest:—"I fear, my dear Henry! you are very ill?"

"It is but a trifle; a day's rest, and I shall be very well."

The feverish heat of his hand convinced his father that it was no trifle.

"Where have you been? Have you undergone any fatigue?"

"No," replied Talbot, with a ghastly smile, "at least I have been in a position of rest, for I have been confined to my bed these some days at the inn at ****."

"What a wretched place!"

"True; they have few of the comforts of this life; but they have kind hearts: their doctor said I was in a dangerous way, and I believe I am indebted to their kind care for my speedy recovery."

"You received my letter at Killarney?"

"I did," said Talbot, whilst indignation heightened his colour at the mention of the letter. "I was going to pay my respects to you at Longwood."

"Time for you," said Lord Ellismore, with a reproachful look. "How many months have you returned from England, before this dutiful inclination arose in your mind?"

Talbot, with great trepidation of manner, made a stammering apology; the purport of which, as well as his father could understand, was, that he presumed his presence at home was not desired, until he should be of age.

Lord Ellismore could reproach him no further, and gazing for some moments in mournful silence on his son's wretched form, said, in a gentle voice—"The first thing we think of, my dear Henry! must be to restore your health; I will send immediately for your friend, Doctor Berry. As to your fulfilling the contract, you may settle that with Eleanor, I will not interfere;—but, listen to me, my son, your mind may be easier when we have no reserve.—Surely you have too much spirit to be disturbed by a woman, who, knowing she had engaged your affections, could marry my servant without the least reluctance?"

Talbot was silent; with difficulty repressing the strong emotion such an assertion raised; it was only betrayed by the working of his countenance.

"What do you say? Will you not now acknowledge love has blinded you? and will you not now acknowledge—"

Talbot, losing all patience, interrupted him, by saying, "I will acknowledge whatever you please; provided such an occurrence has taken place."

"Do you doubt me, Henry?"

The conversation was here broken off by the arrival of Mr. Listowel, and Sir Offingdon Wilmot. They left their ladies in Dublin, who had not yet recovered the sickness occasioned by a tedious passage; but, impatient to see their friends at the deanery, sent to request their company in town.

Listowel looked eagerly round the room, as if in quest of some one, and was on the point of making an inquiry, when Lord Ellismore, alarmed lest Listowel should hear of his harsh conduct towards the Kerry girl, and wishing to be the first to inform him, requested he would withdraw with him for a few minutes into the library, and taking his son by the arm, led the way, whilst Listowel followed.

"I have called you in here," said his lordship, "to request your influence, in leading this poor young man to act with common sense.—He forsakes a lovely and accomplished girl of high birth, whose affections I am certain he has gained,—for one—how shall I describe her?—beautiful, I acknowledge she is—but that little word sums up all her merit; and my son's infatuation appears to me perfectly unaccountable. She has not even constancy to recommend her; for I myself witnessed her marriage with my servant; and she did not, my dear Henry! show the least reluctance."

Listowel listened to him with painful anxiety, and eagerly inquired the lady's name.

Ellismore continued. "This charming Hebe, I understand, was brought up on your estate, among the mountains of Kerry; and she seems to have imbibed more of the sportiveness of the fawn,

than of learned lore from the curate her father. She is, in truth, as wild as the mountain doe, and as untaught."

"Impossible! My dear sir! there must be some mistake. The person you describe cannot be Miss Kelly, the curate's daughter?" said Listowel colouring, and almost as agitated as Talbot.

"Is it, my dear sir, when I myself, saw them married? She refused to let the dean officiate, as his son, had formerly been her lover."

"Oh, sir! pardon me, but I cannot, for a moment, suppose my daughter, my lovely Louisa! could debase herself so."

"Your daughter! Sir, I am shocked at what you tell me. Yet, I confess, I heard a report of the kind; I hope you will pardon me, for I certainly induced her to make this match, by the offer of a hundred pounds."

Here they were startled by a groan, and some one falling from off a sofa

that was near the fire, the back of which was opposite the window where they stood, and completely concealed the person from their view.

They hastened round by the fire place, and found poor Louisa lying insensible; Lord Ellismore was the first to raise her. "What can be the matter!" exclaimed he, in a voice of great interest, "with this lovely young creature?"

"Can you ask? Inhuman man! you have killed my child!" said Listowel, distractedly, as the dreadful idea arose in his mind that she had been forced into a marriage, and had fallen a sacrifice. The thought was madness, it shot like lightning across his brain; and he would have fallen, if Talbot had not caught him; who was not so agonized: he knew his father was incapable of cruelty, and felt a ray of hope in again beholding her,—although fainting—but, was she not supported,—tenderly supported by his father, who hung over her

anxiously endeavouring to restore her to life?

"Who is this incomparable being, he says I have injured?" inquired Ellismore. "Is she your child?—This lovely blossom!—I wish she were mine!—Oh! Talbot; had you placed your affections on this lovely girl, I would not hesitate to sacrifice my ambitious prospects,—but would, with pride, receive her as my daughter!"

"My father! what do you say? Do you know who she is? Will you give your consent?"

"You are not worthy of her, after having placed your affections on such a low vulgar beauty: mere outside is all you look to!"

Louisa's suspended faculties at length seemed returning, and opening her eyes, she heaved a heavy sigh.

Talbot spoke to her, and taking her hand, inquired why she so cruelly had concealed herself from him.

The sound of his voice seemed to restore its wonted animation to her countenance, and a dimpled smile played round her mouth; which soon gave place to sadness on beholding Lord Ellismore intensely gazing on her. "Was not Mr. Listowel here?" she inquired in a faltering voice.

Listowel now came forward.—"Oh! my beloved child!" he said, straining her to his heart; "tell me that you are not miserable; that you have not been forced into a marriage! Speak, my child! do not leave me a prey to the anguish of remorse! Will my darling Louisa forgive me?—Oh, speak!

"I am not married; and, not for worlds, would do so without your consent!—Tell me, is it nature teaches you to call me daughter; or, is it only affection?"

"Who is this fascinating young creature?" said Lord Ellismore, addressing himself to his son.—"Surely you are the

Lothario of the day! if in every lovely young woman I meet, I am to find a would-be-daughter-in-law. If you have engaged this young person's affections, what can I say, but that, had she birth, I would say you have gained a prize; and merited the thanks of your family, for introducing such an ornament into it. But," said he, smiling, " what is to become of your third love?—I cannot allow Eleanor to be trifled with.

" Oh!" said Listowel, laughing, and sitting down by Louisa, " I will promise to provide her with a husband. But who is this girl you have married to your servant? I am all curiosity."

" I think you fathered her?"

" I? Oh, no! I understood you meant this sweet blossom! whom," he said, taking her in his arms, and folding her again to his heart, his countenance glowing with pride and pleasure, " I now openly declare to the whole world to be my second eldest child; supposed to

have died fourteen years ago of the measles.—You stare!" he said, addressing himself to Lord Ellismore, "and look incredulous; but my story is nevertheless true! I will give her to your son with a fortune of ten thousand pounds. But, can I so soon part with my darling?" he said, again embracing her. "How often has my heart burned to fold you in my arms, my best beloved child! What grief and anxiety have I endured in your absence; and what struggles have I undergone! But you do not speak to me, my child!"

"Oh! my dearest father," said Louisa, the brightest hope animating her countenance, whilst she looked at him with the tenderest affection; "I am too happy to speak, and fear lest I should lose a word you say. Did I hear aright?—or am I flattering myself with a sweet delusion?—And yet, did not you say, I am your second child?—Forgive me, my beloved father!" she

said, hiding her tearful eyes in his bosom, at the idea, perhaps, as he had not mentioned her mother, she was only his illegitimate child.

Listowel understood her thoughts; and taking her hand affectionately, said, "What troubles my Louisa?—You may tell all to your mother, Lady Elizabeth, who loved you before she knew her blood run in your veins."

"Oh! I am so happy," said Louisa, holding up her head, and pushing back the glossy ringlets that shaded her ivory forehead, "to have such parents!—such a brother!—such sisters!—How can I bear this delightful transition."

"My beloved Louisa!" said Talbot; his countenance beaming with affection, "how I rejoice in your happiness!"

"You singled me out," she said, tenderly, "when I was unacknowledged by all the world. Do my dear father and mother at the Glebe know my happiness?"

"Are you then the Miss Kelly that was brought up in such deep retirement at Killarney? Can you tell me who this girl is that has personated you, and so completely deceived me? However, I forgive her. I have no reason to complain. She might, in her vulgar phraseology, say, that 'she owed me one;' and that retaliation was fair: but there is no apology for my servant, her husband. I must order that rascal into our presence. He rung the bell, and the servant that answered it was ordered to send up Brian.

"May I, my dear sir!" said Lord Ellismore, addressing Listowel, "ask your reason for so long debarring yourself and family of the pleasure of this young person's society?"

"Come with us into town, my dear friend: see her restored to my Elizabeth; and you will, perhaps, then fathom my motives; and not judge harshly of me for such an extraordinary measure."

"We must pardon you," said Lord Ellismore, "there is such a beautiful result."

Brian now made his appearance; and his lord assuming a threatening aspect, asked what defence he could make for having imposed on him.

"Your Lordship would not believe us when we told you the truth, which we did for conscience sake; but we were right glad when you persisted in your error."

"This note," said Lord Ellismore, "effectually blinded me:—I found it on the table in the lodging house, when I had left your wife alone.—I supposed it hers, and thought such beautiful writing and polished style could come from no vulgar mind:—here it is."

Louisa coloured. "I wrote that note just before I came here, lest you," addressing Talbot, "should be uneasy at my absence."

"This note," continued Lord Ellis-

more, " led me to suppose she assumed vulgar manners for the purpose of deceiving me, and regaining her liberty. She certainly told me she was the Abigail; but the valuable jewels she wore made me receive such an assertion as perfectly incongruous."

Brian, holding down his head, coloured, looked ashamed, and said, stammering—" I hope, madam, you will forgive her?"—addressing Louisa. " You left her to pack up your things; and just by way of a joke, she dressed herself out fine, in your handsomest clothes, and ornamented herself with your jewels."

Louisa smiled, telling her father they were a present from Mary, of Irish diamonds.

Brian continued:—" I hope your lordship will excuse me for being after marrying Judith Donahoe, my old sweetheart.—I have been courting her, do you see, these four years; but she would not

have me until I could scrape together somewhat to buy a cow, and build a snug bit of a cabin.—Poverty only kept us asunder; and when your honour—your lordship I *mane*, was so *ginerous* as to take that excuse from her, what could we do but marry?" said Brian, twirling his fingers, and looking sheepish. He added—"I never intended, do you see, to keep your honour's money—I only left it with her for her diversion, until the *murder was out;* and, indeed, for poor master Harry's sake, do you see, I was in no hurry—he was always kind-hearted, and promised to give me a lift *whensomdever* he should marry Miss Louisa—God bless her!"

Lord Ellismore laughed, and graciously said—"You have made a very handsome and satisfactory apology, and you may keep the bank-note."

"*Is it intirely!* every shilling of it?" said Brian, almost jumping with surprise and delight.

"Certainly."

"Oh! your honour—your lordship I *mane*, is too good!—I and mine are bound for ever to your service!" said Bryan, who was so overcome with joy that he hastened out of the room.

Listowel now requested Louisa would go and prepare for returning with him to Dublin, when Mrs. Belmont burst into the room.

"Upon my credit, I do not know what ye all do, *boxed* up here!—And you, Miss Kelly, I think you might condescend to associate with my Anne; but you learned ladies despise your own sex, and are never satisfied unless surrounded by a bevy of men!"

"You must, in this instance, excuse Louisa," said Listowel. "I detained her; and must now, with your leave, send her to prepare for accompanying me to town."

"*You* to town!—Can I believe my ears?—What will that sweet soul, Lady

Elizabeth, say, when she sees you handing her out of the carriage?"

"If you, my dear madam! have the smallest wish to know, come with us to Dublin: we shall be rejoiced to have your company," said Listowel.

"Yes, truly; and that you would!—You want my countenance! But I am your humble servant, and must remain at home. I am very choice of whom I am seen in company with, and assure you," she said, in a low tone, with an air of great importance, "I sent the dean to fetch her here, lest it should be said I was her *chaprun;* at the same time I should be happy to oblige you in any creditable way."

Listowel smiled, and made no reply. The carriages being ready, the whole party took their leave.

CHAPTER XXVI.

" Concealment is no more, they speak
All circumstances which may compel,
Full credence to the tale they tell."

What Lady Elizabeth would say, on seing Louisa, was a matter of curiosity to more than Mrs. Belmont.

Listowel almost regretted not having prepared her for the meeting; fearing the first ebullition of her jealousy, on seeing him so accompanied, would terrify his poor girl; and destroy those airy prospects of happiness she was so busily sketching. Her anticipations were delightful; whilst she painted in glowing colours to her companion, the friendship she had met

with from Edward and Mary. Then she would listen over and over again, whilst he detailed the sufferings of her childhood, and his taking her to the Kellys.

Sometimes she would reverse the picture of her happiness, and fear her mother, from not attaching herself to her in early youth, would never feel the same affection for her as she did for her other children. Then her mind would wander to the Glebe, and although her father promised she should very soon see the Kellys, yet she feared very much the uneasiness they suffered on her account, would injure their health. She wrote to them the morning of her leaving Dublin, and, surprised at receiving no answer, had written another letter on the preceding day.

Her father at times looked at her with inexpressible pleasure; his thoughts, however, appeared engrossed, and he

seldom spoke but when she addressed him.

At length, with a palpitating heart, Louisa entered Dublin, and very soon after the carriage stopped at the door of her father's house, in Rutland square. Listowel handed her out, and led the poor trembling girl into his wife's presence. She and Lady Ardsallagh were reclining on the sofa; whilst Edward and Robert Belmont were sitting at the table opposite, conversing together.

"Will you, my love! excuse me," said Listowel, addressing Lady Elizabeth, "for bringing into your presence a stranger without permission?"

Lady Elizabeth did not, at the first glance, recognize her, and was on the point of saying something civil, when to her amaze she discovered who the stranger was. She grew deadly pale, the words died away upon her lips, and she sunk down on the sofa, from which she had only half risen.

"You do not speak, my love! or give my friend a welcome; she, at least, is guiltless of this intrusion," said he, looking at his daughter encouragingly.

"Is not this the young person," said Lady Ardsallagh, in a low tone to her friend, "that you were bringing forward—that I had the pleasure of seeing with you at Listowel Park?"

Robert Belmont dared not speak; but, by a look contrived to fan the flame he saw rising in Lady Elizabeth's bosom; which was not lost upon Listowel, who returned it by a glance of haughty contempt. In the mean time her anger mounted high; she saw, by the expression of his countenance, that he would not give up, and that argument on her side would not avail much; she therefore suddenly took the resolution of appearing very reasonable, to expose his ill conduct, and leave him without a possibility of escape.

"I wonder, Listowel," she said, en-

deavouring to assume a calm, firm air, "when you know my sentiments, and the feelings that young lady's presence excites, you would thus act so inconsiderately. However, for her sake, I will endeavour to restrain my emotions; as I am certain she never intentionally offended me; therefore I must forgive you, and suppose you bring her, according to my former plan, of marrying her to our beloved Edward. You say, you know her family is good. —Edward, I am sure, regards her with tenderness, as they have long corresponded together."

Listowel was silent, he looked at Edward and Louisa, and was alarmed at her changing colour.

"What do you say, my love?" said Lady Elizabeth, becoming seriously anxious for the success of her plan. As she saw he heard it without horror, she began to hope he was wrongfully accused. "Consider," continued she,

" consenting to my plan will restore our domestic harmony, and convince the world I am not an injured woman. What do you say ?"

Listowel, during this ebullition of his wife's wrath, gazed at her with ineffable tenderness. At length, putting Louisa's hand in hers, said—" She is yours, dispose of her as you please."

" Astonishing !" said Edward, looking in the deepest amazement.

" What is astonishing ? said Listowel. " Should not a mother dispose of her child ? Kneel ; ask your mother's blessing," said he to Louisa ; " and my forgiveness, for having so long banished you her presence."

" I can easily forgive you on that score," said Lady Elizabeth, regarding the kneeling girl with coldness. " You need not, until she is Edward's wife, call her my child."

" Yes, my best beloved ! my dear Elizabeth !—I restore her to your maternal

arms!—You may well look amazed; but do you not remember your Louisa? Is her impression entirely effaced from your memory? Forgive me, my love! and do not embitter the pleasure I feel at this moment. I tore her from your misjudging fondness when a baby.—You may remember how delicate she was,—and that the doctors pronounced, the only chance she had of life, was strictly adhering to the plan they had laid down. I knew your tenderness, and wish of indulging her, would never suffer you steadily to follow their directions.—— Therefore—pardon the deception—her dying of the measles was a mere pretence."

"Hah!" said Lady Elizabeth, as she listened with increased amazement.—"What then did she die of? My poor child! was it too horrible to impart to me?"

"Oh, no! I stole her from you,—until I could restore her to you such as

the proudest mother would with pleasure acknowledge. Turn towards her, my love!—receive your kneeling daughter!"

"Is she indeed my Louisa?" said Lady Elizabeth, doubtingly. "Pray rise."

"Do you remember the mark I taught you to make in her arm?—You little knew then what my purpose was for so doing."

Lady Elizabeth now condescended to embrace her daughter, who almost lay at her feet. The poor girl was very much affected at being thus publicly acknowledged; her mother's coldness went to her heart, and chilled the warm affection she felt springing towards her. She had gone through many scenes that morning; her hopes raised high, and she had almost staked her happiness on Lady Elizabeth's reception;—fearing, whilst she doubted, the world must consider her as an impostor. These were the reflections of her cooler moments; and now the certainty of her fears being

realized, quite overcame her: her head became dizzy, the light forsook her eyes, and if Edward had not caught her she must have fallen to the ground.

"My dearest sister faints!" said he, tenderly placing her on the sofa by her mother.

"What a beautiful creature she is!" observed Lady Ardsallagh; "her skin like the purest alabaster, and her enchanting figure, as she now lies reclining, would serve a statuary for a model!"

"Her mind is as beautiful as her person!" said Edward, affectionately kissing her cheek. "Dear Louisa! She opens her eyes, she is recovering! Look on your brother, my heart always claimed you as a sister.—I wish Mary were here to share the transport of this moment!" His caressing manner brought back the warm blood to her heart; and opening her beautiful eyes, she endeavoured to struggle against the weakness of her frame. Her mother's eyes were no

longer averted from her; but Louisa could not understand the cause of her extreme sadness, or be so blind as not to observe, there was more of curiosity than of affection in her intense gaze. 'Ah!' thought she, 'her prejudices are so strong against me, that she cannot trace the resemblance so striking to every one. Dear mother!' said she mentally, 'I will not disturb your happiness, or cause those tears;'—she made an effort to speak, but the words died away on her lips. Listowel, observing her distress, handed her a glass of water that stood on the table; it was of the greatest service, and she soon felt sufficiently restored to address her mother.

"I hope, madam," she said, in a low voice, her face as pale as marble, and looking down to the ground; "you will have the goodness, although you cannot love me, never to consider me as an annoyance; and believe me, if my presence be disagreeable to you, it is my wish to

return to my dear friends in Kerry. I shall be very happy there: Edward, I am sure, will visit me."

"Ah! my beloved Louisa!" said her brother, tenderly embracing her; "you do not know my mother, nor how dearly she loves her children. She can never send into banishment one so lovely and unoffending. Dearest mother! take pity on your child! Can you, that have such a tender heart, resist these imploring looks? Receive her, my mother! How often, in early infancy, have we both embraced you; and, now again in our riper years, united by the tenderest affection, we throw our arms round your neck, and demand your blessing!"

"You do not understand me, Edward; —you know I am not apt to be in extacies with strangers.—I have already, on your father's word, acknowledged her;—and what more can she demand? Therefore pray be satisfied!" said Lady Elizabeth, coldly returning their em-

brace; "and as to your request, Louisa, although Kerry might have been a proper place for your infancy, yet, for the present, we must think of one more eligible; and where you can be fashioned a little, learn some of the accomplishments most in vogue, and lose completely all remains of the Kerry accent. You certainly are very much improved in that respect; but, before we present you as our own, into the great world, it is necessary that it should not be discernible to the nicest ear."

"Or," said Belmont, who now ventured to speak, as Listowel was talking to his son at the other end of the room, "she will be called the Kerry Foundling; they may transpose the play of Douglas, and instead of 'On Grampian hills,' &c. it may be on Kerry hills,—and a very pretty shepherdess. It will make a charming novel, the incidents properly worked up.

Lady Elizabeth gave him a look ex-

pressive of despair, as much as to say, 'What can I do? how can I act?' Her glance was returned by one full of meaning; although unintelligible to poor Louisa, who felt considerable alarm, fearing those glances boded her mischief, and that her mother, would form her opinion of her from Belmont's representations.

Lord Ardsallagh now entered the room with Talbot.

The former went up immediately to Louisa. "Will you, my fair niece, allow me to congratulate you, on being restored to your family?" he said, tenderly embracing her; "and to assure you, I consider you as one of its brightest ornaments? What a very strong resemblance you bear my sister! I think her features," he said, addressing Lady Elizabeth, "are more strikingly like yours than Mary's, who has more the expression of your countenance; whilst Louisa's resembles her father. You are happy, my

sister, in having such a daughter to present. I think the beaux will flock round you next Winter."

Lady Elizabeth now regarded her daughter with a more favourable eye; whose claim she felt, would be established effectually by Lord Ardsallagh's warm reception and unqualified approbation, however wild and improbable the story; all the particulars of which, Listowel promised, he would, in Doctor Berry's presence, detail; and the next day, when at Holly Mount, examine the different witnesses.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"It now remains for me the event to tell!"

Mrs. Belmont saw there was a mystery about Louisa that was on the point of being developed; and now loudly regretted her *scrupolosity*, as she called it, which kept her from unfathoming those family secrets.

She sent an express to Lady Offingdon, requesting she would keep a *sharp look-out*, and let her know what Listowel did with the girl. For surely he never could have the assurance to bring her in the face of all his family.

Lady Offingdon, kindly attentive to her mother's wishes, drove, with her brother, early the next morning, to the Deanery, that they might be the first to

reveal the strange circumstances, now publicly declared in the Listowel family.

Robert was the first to enter his mother's presence. He came in, exclaiming—"Oh! mother! what a pretty piece of work you have made of it!—So, you refused to patronize Lady Elizabeth Listowel's eldest daughter!"

"Cease, you *graceless cub*! reproaches are never out of your's and Watty's mouth; although never poor woman toiled and *moiled* as I have done for all your advantages, since you were the height of my thumb!—But where is your dear sister?—my dear lady-daughter!"

When their friendly salutations were over, Mrs. Belmont's curiosity returned; and she again inquired what Listowel had done with that artful baggage.

On which Robert reiterated the reproach he made on entering the room.

"The boy is dreaming!" exclaimed Mrs. Belmont. "Why bother me about Mary Stockdale? I never even *pluck'd a*

crow with her in my life—I wish the poor thing was here—they say her *nose is kept to the grinding-stone* by that ugly Blue-Beard."

"Oh, I do not mean Mary."

"Who then?—the child Frances?"

"No; I mean Louisa!"

"What!—Has he come to confession? And does he say who the girl's mother is?"

"Oh, mother! but for your prudence, she might now have been mine, and ten thousand pounds into the bargain!"

"Ten thousand nonsense!—Listowel is not such a fool."

"He tells you truth, mother," said Lady Wilmot; "Louisa, who we supposed to be a relation of Mr. Kelly's, is Lady Elizabeth's eldest daughter."

"Bless my heart! What do you say? How came she to be kept concealed?"

Robert Belmont then detailed all the circumstances he had heard the preceding day from Listowel; whilst Mrs. Bel-

mont testified her surprise by exclamations and gesticulations; and when she heard all, declared—"Upon my credit, I never in all my *born days* heard any thing so extraordinary—its mighty like what you read in a book! Good gracious! many a hard rub I gave her when you were running after her, *Bob*.—may be she has a hankering after you; but, no; sure enough, she always kept you and all the men at a distance. She had a mighty high manner, at times, that awed even me. Did she know her quality?"

"Oh, no!—her ignorance in that respect caused her great unhappiness."

"Well then, see now; she had no low ways!—and though the Kellys could teach her nothing genteel; yet, did you ever see one with a prettier air coming into a room, or that knew how to behave better. Upon my credit, I was a fool! not to know she was a gentlewoman born, *every inch* of her; but, dear *Bob!*

forgive your mother, and do not let your little fairy queen slip through your fingers; consider, she is a prize; and a richer one than the *t'other!*

"Oh, there is no danger!" said he, with a bitter smile, shrugging his shoulders.

"I believe so; you could have her for asking any day—she is *ripe fruit*, and has fallen many a day ago!—It is only who will pick her up."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Whene'er th' event of hopes success, appears,
One happy hour cancels the toil of years!
A thousand toils are lost in Lethe's stream,
And cares evanish like a morning dream.
When wish'd-for pleasures rise like morning light,
The pain that's past enhances the delight—
These joys I feel, that words can ill express,
I ne'er had known without my late distress.

ALLAN RAMSAY.

As Louisa was impatient to see the Dunstanvilles, they proposed taking her to the cottage the next day on their way to Holly Mount; Listowel observed, it was proper she should meet Eleanor, and amicably arrange which Talbot should have.

On their arrival they were shown into the library; where they interrupted a *tete-à-tète* between Sybella and Robert

Belmont, who appeared confused, and as if he wished his companion a hundred miles off. She affected to look modest, and slipping down from her chair, went to apprise her aunt of their presence. Robert seemed relieved by her absence, and unnecessarily anxious to account for their being engaged in such earnest conversation. He then attempted to congratulate Louisa on being restored to her family; but her cold formal manner kept him at a distance. He succeeded no better with Listowel; and fearing, from the sternness of his brow, that he might be exposed to further mortifications, hastily left the room.

Listowel had great pleasure in presenting his daughter to the Dunstanvilles. Eleanor already loved her; they talked of Mary, and gave Louisa hopes of her speedy arrival. She had promised a visit to the Dunstanvilles; and now, they were certain, Stockdale would be anxious to indulge her, and

to embrace his new-found sister-in-law. Eleanor said, in an under voice to Louisa, that since her absence, they had many smart contests, and had even talked of a separation; that at present they had patched up a reconciliation. She said both parties looked up to her, and expected a great deal from her influence with the other. "This influence will be much increased, when they discover you are her sister," added Eleanor.

The Listowels now took their leave, and proposed, as the distance was not far to Holly Mount, that Eleanor should accompany them. Listowel gave her a letter, unobserved by Sybella. Blushing deeply, she hastily put it up, on his saying it was given him for her by his fellow traveller. He further excited her curiosity, by his evident anxiety that she only of her family should join their party. Sybella, out of contradiction, was very near intruding, and went to seek Mr. Belmont to carry her umbrella.

They did not await her return, urging their impatience to see Frances as an apology for their rudeness.

Frances met them in the avenue, but not unaccompanied. Charles Dunstanville, with equal impatience, came forward to meet his beloved Eleanor. He was no longer pale and thin;—health and happiness now illuminated his countenance, reminding Eleanor of what he was in joyous youth:

> "Where thought ere spoke is unconfin'd,
> And sparkles in the placid eye."

They spent the morning there, and agreed that Dunstanville should remain in concealment, until Talbot and Eleanor had made known their sentiments.

During their absence, Lady Elizabeth was examining every attendant she had employed about Louisa in her infancy, particularly those who attended her during the supposed measles. She was, at length, quite satisfied as to her iden-

tity, and promised herself great pleasure, and increased consequence, in presenting such a lovely young person to the world. Still Belmont's representations and insinuations, prevented her from having heart-felt pleasure in the discovery. She believed him to be her sincere friend; and that he would be her lover, were he not awed by the dignity of her manners. Listowel's jealousy flattered her vanity; although she feared his restricting her conduct, and objecting to her seeing him in private. She was extremely anxious to force him to an explanation; and intended, if he continued obstinate, appealing to his sister, Lady Wilmot.

Her brother persuaded her to give up the idea of educating Louisa further; pleading, that her manners were naturally so good, that she would be considered, in the fashionable world, a model, —her native and provincial accent rendering her more interesting; and that,

if she had not a few peculiarities, the world would forget her story. This was a most happy supposition for Louisa, as it led Lady Elizabeth to view her with a more favourable eye; and little persuasion was necessary to prevent her recalling Madame, whom Robert Belmont had strongly recommended, as the properest person to form a young lady's manners.

In a few days Louisa received letters of congratulation from Stockdale and Mary, dated from Mrs. Dunstanville's cottage, expressing their impatience to see her; and, as Mary was too much fatigued from her journey to proceed further, having arrived there that morning, Mrs. Dunstanville requested they would all spend the day with her.

They joyfully accepted the invitation; even Lady Elizabeth was touched by the meeting of the sisters; and acknowledged she felt more true happiness in thus being surrounded by her affectionate children, than she ever had experienced in the gayest festive scene.

The sight of so much felicity was gall to Sybella; and unable very long to endure it, she retired to her own apartment, where she sat in melancholy foreboding, anticipating the downfal of her schemes.—Most of all, Eleanor's happy countenance alarmed her—she could not discover what was become of Dunstanville, and now felt convinced their letters, which she received and opened as usual, were written merely to blind her, and that the lovers had some other mode of communicating their sentiments. The idea of being thus deceived, lowered Robert Belmont considerably in her estimation; for, had she been properly seconded, she was satisfied, there could be no secret, where they were on such terms of intimacy, but she might have developed. However, she restrained her anger, and at this time would have forgiven him even a greater offence.

CHAPTER XXIX.

———"Forget the world was new,
And the heart promis'd what the fancy drew."

Time flew with Louisa on halcyon's wings. Courted, admired, and loved by her newly found relations, the reality of her happiness far supassed what she had dared to suppose; although she seldom saw Talbot, who was ordered by his father to keep in the back ground, until the day appointed for the final settlement between him and Eleanor. The young people had made Lord Ellismore acquainted with their plans; he rejoiced they had a prospect of being so happy, but continued faithful to the trust reposed in him by Mrs.

Dunstanville; who, although too much in awe of her niece to undeceive her daughter, yet, on every occasion, gave her reason to suppose that she wished her to follow her inclinations, provided she were not consulted. They, however, were determined on not taking advantage of this permission, until it could be openly declared, for the sake of example to society, lest any should suppose, they would at the altar call for the benediction of heaven, to what was not sanctioned by a parent. They were, however, determined, with Talbot's assistance, to arrange matters so, as that she should not come to a rupture with Sybella, who, they for some time suspected, had transferred her affections to Robert Belmont. He was now in constant attendance. Eleanor assured them, she never saw her so kind to any one; that her features absolutely relaxed into a smile on his approach; and that her general manners were not so harsh as formerly.

They could not perceive equal affection beaming in his eye towards her; not, at least, what was genuine: he seemed to affect much, never leaving her side, where he appeared spell bound; and as if his wearied feelings would have otherwise led him away. Sometimes, when off his guard, the horror and disgust he felt towards her would appear; his family complained of his temper being quite altered; they thought him grown so morose; and they observed, that for the last few days, even Sybella herself, did not escape his sarcasms, and to their surprise it extorted from her no retort. On the contrary, she tried to soften his asperity by mildness. But, as time went on, they observed their differences of opinion were more frequent; their little bickerings every day assumed a more serious air, and at length ended in downright quarrelling: however, they were quickly reconciled, and Sybella would express

great displeasure if Mrs. Dunstanville resented his rudeness; and was in consequence dilatory in her invitations.

This conduct appeared equally strange to Lady Elizabeth, who felt alarmed at the fury of Sybella's looks when she engrossed Robert Belmont's attention. Listowel was amused, and soon perceived he might relax in his restrictions; for that this delectable young man was guarded by a dragon, that would spit fire and venom at any female who dared engage his attentions.

CHAPTER XXX.

There surely is some guiding pow'r
Which rightly suffers wrong—
Gives Vice to bloom its little hour—
But Virtue late and long!

CAMOENS.

AT length the eventful day arrived on which Talbot was to claim Eleanor's hand, or resign his pretensions to her, and to sixteen thousand a year. His father no longer urged him to the marriage, and charmed his son by his generosity in not withholding his consent, where the lady, comparatively speaking, had such a small fortune; but that was not thought of by Lord Ellismore, who felt more grateful than ever for the large property left him, as it allowed him to

indulge his son in marrying this lovely young person. By her gentle and affectionate manners she had gained his heart; and he loved her almost equally with Talbot.

This was likewise a momentous day to Eleanor and Dunstanville; Sybella's baneful influence they hoped would no longer interrupt their happiness, and that Mrs. Dunstanville would now consent to reward them for years of probation.

The company assembled at twelve; and having partaken of a splendid breakfast, went to see the tenantry, who were at dinner in tents on the lawn.

When they had for some time witnessed their merriment, Lord Ellismore strove to detatch Mrs. Dunstanville from the crowd; reminding her, that on this day they had agreed their children were to declare their sentiments towards each other. Whilst he was yet speaking, a note was handed to Mrs. Dunstanville.

She started on seeing the hand-writing; "This," exclaimed she, "is from Charles Dunstanville! I fear, my lord, he will dispute your claim?"

Lord Ellismore smiled, and said—"I am, nevertheless, my dear madam! obliged to you, for your wish of being allied to our family,—but the Fates and the Dunstanvilles are against it;—first, your husband snatched you from me; and now, his nephew acts a part equally cruel by my son."

"I trust the son will lament the loss as little as the father.—In this," said she, handing him the letter, "Charles claims the consent I formerly gave, and of which, the poor fellow says, he would have availed himself sooner, but that he did not hear of it until lately. Read how generous he is: it will, he says, be the study of his and my child's life to make me happy.—I am not to suffer in point of income."

"He writes with good feeling, and offers very handsomely; your daughter

he says, has made an arrangement with my son. It seems, she is to give him half the fortune, and the other half she is to settle on you. Dunstanville adds, that my Henry refuses to receive any part of her inheritance, but they know he requires it, and are determined to carry their point.—We may feel proud of our children; let us hasten to end their difficulties, and let them know their power. You will, my dear madam! be happy to hear that I have likewise joyful intelligence for my poor son; I should no longer say poor, as I have been left nobly by a distant relation. You may remember Twisdale; we always thought his riches incalculable: well, he has left me his sole heir, in reversion to my son."

"I am delighted to hear it, even for my Eleanor's sake; for I am certain she would never have been satisfied to have your son deceived, and would have insisted on making good our pretence."

They were suddenly startled by hear-

ing Sybella vociferating in a loud voice, almost amounting to a roar; they heard her burst open the door of the adjoining apartment, and then, in a voice nearly choked with passion, say:

"I have no notion, madam, of what your business with this gentleman can be; or what can be his motive for desiring my absence."

To which they heard Lady Elizabeth calmly reply:—

"I should suppose my business was of little consequence to you;—uninteresting at least, in not concerning you in the smallest degree.—Therefore, I hope, madam, you will give me no further interruption in my conversation with Mr. Robert Belmont."

"I do not understand you, madam; do you wish me to leave you?"

"Most certainly."

"That I will not! What will Mr. Listowel say? What will your brother, what will the world say?"

They now heard Belmont's voice: he spoke so low they could not hear what he said, until he moved towards Sybella; when he uttered, in a low fondling tone—"Come, pray do not be angry: why, my dear Syb. will not you allow me a few moments conversation with my old friend? Pray be calm!"

Mrs. Belmont, likewise, having overheard the altercation, now joined them, impatient to know how her Bobby had offended her dear Miss Sybella. She listened for a few moments to Sybella, in a whining voice pouring forth her complaint, and then replied—"Oh, fie! Bobby!—I must say you have given the young lady cause of complaint; when she is so good as to take such a liking to you, you should not look at any lady in the land,—and I am certain sure he would not, were it not Lady Elizabeth, who he has known since he was *that big;* and I think he is as fond of her in the

way of Platonics as he is of me—they have always a power of chat."

"Oh, ma'am!" replied Sybella, "you are cruelly deceived!—I overheard what they were saying.—He is a liar! I say it to his face;—and a deceiver!—I myself overheard him tell her that he loved her—with passion loved her!—Therefore, not understanding Mr. Listowel's behaviour relative to his pretended natural child—he had, perhaps, been too zealous, too anxious lest her peace of mind should be disturbed.—He talked a great deal more nonsense."

"Oh, my dear Miss Sybella! you must be deceived—be assured her ladyship would not listen to a declaration of love from him!" said Mrs. Belmont, pale with anger; yet afraid of further irritating Sybella. "He dared not offend her delicacy with such talk; and no disparagement to you, Miss Sybella, but you know your *lugs* are not quite right; and—"

"My what! ma'am?—*lugs*, do you say? I suppose that is one of your Irish expressions."

"Well, miss; in plain English I mean to say, that as your ears are bothered, my Bobby might have been talking of you; and you, knowing listeners never hear good of themselves, set it all down to the count of her ladyship."

"Oh! no, no! he called me names, and said he was civil to me, as you wanted him to get my fortune!—There was besides a great deal of conversation that did not reach my ear; but, let her not be flattered; were his soft nonsense ever so tender, could she overhear his conversation with me he would not be in such high favour:—the secret of his attentions to her would not be very gratifying to her vanity," said she, with a scornful glance towards her rival, and her eyes twinkling with malice. "His vows of love to me, she would have heard, were as ardent. She would have

heard him deny feeling for her the least attachment; and acknowledge that his motive for appearing so enamoured was, the amiable hope of injuring her character; in order, through her, to obtain his revenge on Mr. Listowel, and ruin his peace of mind for ever."

"Your tale is not artfully drawn," said Mr. Stockdale, who, with several others, had followed Mrs. Belmont, attracted by curiosity to know the cause of the loud speaking. "You would have woven it better had you known that Mr. Robert Belmont has always experienced parental tenderness from Mr. and Lady Elizabeth Listowel."

"I have spoken only the truth!" vociferated Sybella, and repeated, until she quite lost her breath, artful expressions of Belmont's against the Listowels. When she ceased there was a general pause—every one looked horror-struck. Mrs. Belmont, bursting with passion, was the first to break the silence. Bustling up to

Sybella, with her arms squared, she said, in a voice as loud as her own—"I do not understand you, ma'am; but must take the liberty of telling you that you are quite in the wrong box—there is not a child of mine but would die to serve a Listowel; and Bob. above all!"

"Oh, yes, ma'am!" drawled out Sybella, "he was so grateful to him for exposing his bad conduct on the Continent, and betraying him to his father!"

"He did complain to his father," returned Mrs. Belmont, "as the only means of putting a stop to his courses; but at the same time, he stood between him and his wrath; screening him from punishment, and giving both money and credit to relieve him from his difficulties."

"Then," replied Sybella, "his character is as deformed as he represented my figure to be. Oh! I could such a tale unfold; but this letter for Lady Elizabeth's satisfaction shall suffice!"

Robert Belmont, who had appeared panic-struck, now darted forward, and tried to snatch the letter from her.

"Woman!" said he, "I charge you give me that letter!—or, I will this moment leave you, never to return!"

He was too late—when handing it to Lady Elizabeth, Listowel snatched it. Robert Belmont turned pale with rage, and passionately flinging back Sybella's hand, said—"We part for ever!"

"Oh, do not say so!" uttered Sybella, in a softer key, and in an imploring manner altogether unusual. "Let us mutually forgive—consider my fortune depends on it."

"You have put that out of account," growledout Belmont; "that letter will undo us!—Your father will make his nephew his heir—I would not give you that," he said, snapping his fingers, "for your chance!—Mind, madam! you had better in future look to your behaviour—for in making me master of yourself, I became likewise master of your

property; and, unless you keep that little busy member, your tongue, in better order, you will receive no maintenance from me."

"What! have you married her?" exclaimed Mrs. Dunstanville and Mrs. Belmont.

"We have been married these three weeks," said the repentant bridegroom.

"I did not think," said Mrs. Dunstanville, "you, Sybella, were the kind of person to be drawn in to make a mere love match; but," turning to Robert, "every eye forms a beauty."

"Pray, madam, do not form so bad an opinion of my taste—I married her for her fortune, and indulged her by a private marriage—she feared the approbation of her friends would be difficult to obtain, and that her father would not consent, at least until he—"

"His consent," said Mrs. Dunstanville, "was of some consequence—her fortune depends on it."

"That is," said Robert, "what she inherits from her father."

"I beg your pardon," said Mrs. Dunstanville, "her mother's property, likewise, was hers only on those conditions."

"So I have married a portionless hunchback!"

A violent altercation here ensued, in which all Robert's schemes were developed by his angry rib; whilst, on the other hand, he, with equal venom, exposed her treacherous conduct towards Eleanor and Dunstanville. The battle grew high, and at length the enraged combatants were parted lest they should tear each others' eyes out.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"If there be any fertile source of mischief to human life, it is beyond doubt the misrule of passion. It is this which poisons the enjoyment of individuals, overturns the order of society, and strews the path of life with so many miseries, as to render it indeed the valley of tears."

When the combatants were separated, Lord Ellismore reminded his friend that the company for the ball would soon assemble; and he requested, if they did did not choose the scene of the morning should make a paragraph in the newspapers, that they would, with their persons, dress their countenances, and let no trace of the horror they felt be discovered. Already, he feared, curiosity had been excited; Sybella was so loud, and some of their guests had been in the

hall during the altercation. "But," observed he, "I perceive some of the dismal faces have disappeared; Louisa, for instance, and my son—they forget their happiness was ever in jeopardy. May you, my children, be happy in each other!" he said, affectionately throwing an arm round each. "Where is Listowel, and her ladyship?—until they join with me in blessing you, my children;—and where is Eleanor?—a sly baggage! you and Talbot played upon us all. Oh! that blush! Cheer up, my love! you were more 'sinned against than sinning'. —I will send this moment for your Dunstanville; he waits for our summons at Holly Mount."

"Oh! what's to be done?" said Mrs. Belmont, returning; "we are all, as one may say, out of our wits, fairly bothered! and I, as bad as any of you, quarrelling with my own flesh and blood. There is the dean has turned *Bobby* out of the house; when I, like a great fool, told

him out and out every word that was said: and sure I knew, although he is the most innocent lamb when no one crosses him, that this would set him in a fury; and so it did: and I, unnatural mother! stood by, and saw *Bobby* turned out!" Here she could no longer restrain her tears. "But after all," she said, wiping her blubbered face, "I should not take on so, for Miss Syb. *Miss Devil*, is gone before him; and, upon my credit, they may make up their quarrels; neither can cry shame to the other. Oh! that I should be the mother of such a graceless cub!" She now took breath for a few moments, and then continued: "What a hubbub there is in the house! There is Lady Elizabeth, and Mrs. Dunstanville, the two dupes, as they call themselves, each ashamed to see the light of the sun, or their children's faces: her ladyship has ordered her carriage to return to Dublin, and the widow bewitched, as, upon my credit, I may call her, is gone to bed."

"This must not be; where is Listowel?" asked Lord Ellismore.

"Walked over to Holly Mount."

"I will follow him.—Eleanor, I suppose, is gone to her mother. Do you, Louisa, and Mrs. Stockdale, try and prevail on Lady Elizabeth to alter her purpose; at least I will speak to the servants to delay the carriage until Listowel returns; let us have no rash proceedings, or we shall become the talk of the country."

Lady Elizabeth refused to open her door; and her daughters, afraid of offending her, withdrew, until their father should gain them admittance.

Eleanor, on hearing of her mother's despair, went to her room, which she found darkened. She approached the bed softly, and her mother, concealing her face in the bed clothes, said—"Oh! my injured child! I am afraid to see you; what will become of me? Duped as I have been by that artful woman! Duped do I say! Alas! will you not

think, rather, that I connived at treachery, and that now my affliction proceeds from shame at being discovered?"

"Oh! do not say so, my mother! Whilst you are in affliction I never can be happy. Sybella has left the house; let her baneful influence end here: forget her and her machinations, and we shall be happy; at least, if your Eleanor and poor Charles can make you so, it will be the study of our lives. We have long known many of the circumstances this day revealed—we pitied you for being governed, and were grateful to you for the implied consent you gave to our union. Dearest mother! do not weep!"

"My beloved Eleanor! I do not deserve your kindness; but, before I leave this bed, let me explain to you how she contrived to tyrannize over me. Oh! my child! what will your feelings be! How dreadful to a mother the blushes she raises on a daughter's cheek by her misconduct!—How keenly I feel it!—But what avails a high sense of honour

to one that is not gifted with prudence: it made me the easier prey to my niece. Oh! that I had your pious mind!—I should then have tried my conduct at a different bar, and the fiend would have been powerless!"

She then related to her daughter the danger she had incurred from her love of play; and acknowledged, that the fear of her husband, and a dread of her gambling debts being exposed to the world, rendered Sybella's interference fortunate, in saving her from De Morne. Eleanor proposed immediately repaying her what she had given, and the interest due.

"I paid her the following year one-half, and the remainder the year after, with exorbitant interest and premium. In short, for three years I was without a sixpence. Your father, at length, was out of patience, seeing me always in the same dresses. I had nothing new, excepting a few things I ventured to take on credit."

"What a monster she is!—But she has met her match!—It is fortunate their tempers are too furious to coalesce, or else the mischief they would plan and execute would be incalculable!"

It was some time before Lady Elizabeth would, even for Listowel, open her door. She said, after having been so deceived, she was ashamed to see him, and could never make him amends for the injurious suspicions she was led to entertain to his prejudice, and to the detriment of her amiable child. "Where is my Louisa?" she inquired. Listowel called her—her mother embraced her tenderly. "My dearest child! what amends can I make you for so long withholding my love? But, still you must allow, that notwithstanding the pains taken to incense me against you, I ever did justice to your merit, and was anxious for your union with my Edward; which, if I had not felt a prepossession in your favour, unaccountable to me then, I would never, merely from my

wish to satisfy my doubts, have consented to."

Louisa was very grateful, and said—"Now her dear mother loved her, she was the happiest creature in the world, and that nothing was wanting to her felicity but the presence of the Kellys and her dear Mrs. Jackson."

She had no sooner expressed her wish, than they saw an old-fashioned chaise drive up the back approach. It stopped at a glass door opening from the breakfast-room to the pleasure-ground. Louisa saw her kind foster-parents and Mrs. Jackson descend from it, and was the next moment in their arms. The old couple were very much affected, particularly Mrs. Kelly.—Louisa would admit no one to them until they were quite composed, and had heard from her all her story. She then had the gratification of presenting them to her friends, and of hearing her father express his gratitude for their parental care of her. The good old

couple disclaimed all merit; saying, they ever regarded her as one of heaven's choicest blessings, and as the comfort of their declining age.

"I hope she will ever prove so!" said Talbot; "for my father has kindly consented that we should divide our time between you and him."

Mr. Kelly appeared very much affected by this generosity. "Excellent young man!" he said, "this proves the goodness and generosity of your heart; and what stronger proof can my child have of your love for her?"

"I cannot," said Listowel, "but admire the justice of the plan; but lament, that in this arrangement, I am to have so little of her society."

"I think, my love!" said Lady Elizabeth, "we might spend our Summers at Listowel Park—then we should be near our child; and when she is at Lord Ellismore's, we shall not be very distant from her, either when in Dublin or at Holly Mount."

Listowel was very thankful to his wife for this arrangement; who said, it was the least atonement she could make for having caused him so much uneasiness.

Mary said she was forgotten in this plan: but Stockdale assured her to the contrary, as he had promised to spend great part of every year with her parents.

"Oh!" she replied, laughing, "it is your interest to have me constantly with Louisa, as she will keep me to my good resolutions. But, indeed, I suffered so much uneasiness from quarrelling, that so long as you continue reasonable, there is no danger of my falling into that error."

Lord Ellismore now summoned them to the drawing-room to receive the company, who were fast assembling; he allowed Louisa to remain with her foster-parents until the ball should commence. Then the good old couple, and Mrs. Jackson could not resist the pleasure of joining the festive crowd, in order to see

their dear child open the ball with Talbot; and felt the highest gratification in listening to their praises from all around.

The next day, the letter that Listowel had received from Sybella occurred to Lady Elizabeth; she asked him what it contained.

"I have not read it; sufficient has been discovered to develop the intricacies of his character to us all. Had I not better restore it to his hateful wife unopened? She may make terms with him by having it."

Lady Elizabeth assented, and accordingly, he returned it to her at the end of a few days; when she had the assurance to write to Mrs. Belmont, to beg her interference in reconciling her with her son, whom she had not seen since. —She was then on her way to her father's, and expected to arrive there the next day.

Accordingly, Mrs. Belmont wrote to her son a letter of excellent advice;

informing him that Mr. Listowel had inclosed the letter he was so anxious about, to his wife, unread by any one there; and that neither had any thing to fear from the vengeance of the Dunstanvilles or Listowels; therefore he might hope to gain the old gentleman's favour, and that she trusted he would now reform his conduct. She added, his father desired he would not presume to return to Ireland, until, by steady adherence to duty, he had recovered the approbation of those he had injured.

They entertained little doubt the angry pair would soon, from policy, be reconciled, and join in deceiving the old gentleman.

In about three weeks from Talbot's coming of age, there was another double wedding at Holly Mount; and never did the votaries of Hymen enter the marriage state with more prospect of felicity; their confidence in each other was unbounded. By their bright example, Stockdale and Mary improved; his

manners softened, and became more complying, whilst she took infinite pains to try his forbearance as seldom as possible.

Eleanor, shortly after their marriage, returned to England to visit her family, and, with her mother's assistance, found little trouble in restoring her husband to his family. They likewise visited her uncle, who was now quite reconciled to Sybella and Belmont.

For about a year they continued to deceive him; at length, their aversion towards each other could not even be restrained by prudence; Belmont lost all command of his temper, on discovering his wife had prevailed on her father to cut him out of her landed property, in case of her dying childless, and settle it on Eleanor and her family. Sybella had urged him to make this settlement, under the idea that her husband would treat her better when so much depended on her life; it gave her, likewise, a malignant satisfaction, to let him see she was

not to be outwitted; and that he should never possess a property, which she was now convinced, comprised, in his eye, her only charm. She could not, therefore, at all times conceal her triumphant feelings; frequently, when provoked, giving way to her spleen, deeming her life of too much consequence to dread his vengeance. But in this her judgment erred; she did not consider how impossible it was for his proud spirit to submit, where he could command; and that although avarice and ambition taught him to cringe to his superiors, yet he could never learn to restrain an irritable temper, or preserve a show of respect towards one he despised so heartily, and saw so constantly. Vain, therefore, was her effort to teach him submission to her will: their battles became every day more serious: when she grew very loud, he found taking her by the shoulders and shaking her well, was the most effectual method of making her hold her tongue. Pleased with the

discovery, he had often recourse to this new method of enforcing silence.

On one eventful morning, when he had neglected to close the door, ere the curtain lecture commenced, old Dunstanville, hearing their voices in high altercation, came in haste to know what was the matter. When he reached the door, Belmont stood with his back to him, in the very act of shaking his wretched wife, and threatening to beat her if she did not instantly keep silence. He inquired if she wanted the old *curmudgeon*, her father, to hear their wrangling.

The applying to her prudence might have had some effect, if he had not affronted her by such an insulting threat. She vociferated louder—he raised his hand with the intention of striking her —but before it could reach her tiny form, she fell down at his feet in a fit, having burst a blood-vessel. He was seriously alarmed, and raising her up, was preparing to act an hypocritical

part; when, to his utter dismay, he found his father-in-law had witnessed this last dreadful scene.

Sybella lived only a few hours; her husband did not wait to see the event. Fearing he should have to stand his trial for her murder, he fled to the Continent, taking with him large sums of money, which she had vested in the funds, and bitterly upbraiding himself, not with his wife's death, but, for his extreme folly in allowing her landed property to slip through his fingers. So true it is, as Junius observes,—"We owe it to the bounty of Providence, that the completest depravity of heart, is sometimes strangely united with a confusion of the mind, which counteracts the most favourite principles; and makes the same man treacherous without art, and a hypocrite without deceiving."

Charles Dunstanville and his Eleanor, endeavoured, by the most dutiful attention, to sooth the old gentleman's mind; he had received a dreadful shock,

and it was some time before their affectionate exertions were crowned with success. It was agreed they should live with him, and in a short time, Eleanor, with grateful pleasure heard him acknowledge, that the gratification he derived from her society, the high opinion he had of her understanding, and the amiable dispositions he met amongst her female friends, had entirely conquered his antipathy to the fair sex; and as a proof of their having won his esteem, he settled, some time before his death, Sybella's fortune on Eleanor's eldest daughter.

FINIS.

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